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ABSTRACT

Project SOAR (Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal) provides academic and personal mentoring and family support services to at-risk middle and high school students in six schools of the Tucson (Arizona) Unified School District. In 1996-97, 95 participants were served by the program and 95 mentors participated. This resulted in a win-win situation since students benefited from the mentoring, and mentors benefited from the experience of mentoring. The goals of Project SOAR were to increase the number of students who achieved success in their academic and personal lives and to provide valuable training and preprofessional experience to the education students who served as mentors. The program included eighth and ninth grade components and a teen parent component. Evaluation findings indicated that attendance increased and suspension rates decreased for participants. Overall, student grade point averages did not increase, although some improvement was evident for eighth graders. Self-confidence and self-esteem were increased for participants, and skill-building and positive social interactions were provided by the project. Parent and student communication was fostered by project events, while career exploration was enhanced and numbers of students considering higher education increased. Eighteen appendixes present information about the elements of parent involvement in schools and forms and questionnaires used in the evaluation. (Contains 4 figures, 14 tables, and 16 references.) (SLD)

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ED 412 269

# PROJECT SOAR
# 1996-1997

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
## UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

## EVALUATION REPORT

**Stephen Powers, Ph.D. and Stanley McConner, Ph.D.**

**Creative Research Associates**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project SOAR (Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal) provides academic and personal mentoring and family support services to at-risk middle and high school students in six schools of the Tucson Unified School District (Catalina High School, Pueblo High School, Tucson Magnet High School, Doolen Middle School, Mansfeld Middle School and Wakefield Middle School), Sunnyside Unified School District (Sunnyside High School, Desert View High School) and Flowing Wells Unified School District (Flowing Wells High School).

A total of 95 participants or students are served by the program (60 in TUSD schools, 20 in SUSD schools, and 15 in FWUSD schools), and a total of 95 mentors participated in Project SOAR. This resulted in a win-win situation because students benefitted from the mentoring, and the mentors benefitted from the experience of mentoring.

**Goals of Project SOAR:**

- To increase the number of students who achieve success in their academic and personal lives, and
- To provide valuable training and pre-professional experience to education students.

**Evaluation Findings:**

- attendance rates increased
- suspension rates decreased
- student classroom GPAs did not improve overall, but eighth graders showed some improvement
- self-confidence and self-esteem improved
- skill-building and positive social interactions were provided by the project
- parent and student communication was fostered through regular, planned events
- career exploration was encouraged, and
- numbers of students considering higher education increased.

Conclusions and recommendations for improving the program are presented in the report.

# 1.0 RESEARCH ON MENTORING

Research on Mentoring

Mentoring is a complex activity involving a mentor, an intern, novice, or student, and a process. The definition of a good mentor, or an effective mentoring relationship is difficult to define. One theme emerges in the mentor-student relationship: it is a transformative relationship (Cienkus, Haworth, & Kavanagh, 1996). When Wildman, Magliaro, and Niles (1992) reviewed the research on mentoring, they identified the following as the necessary traits of an effective mentor:

- collaboration,
- enthusiasm,
- emotional commitment, and
- sensitivity.

Other authors (Gluckman & Bey, 1991) found that mentors were available, gave immediate feedback, listened attentively, and collaboratively solved problems with students. These mentor traits depict the broad scope of the mentoring relationship and the wide range of abilities of the effective mentor. The academic-tutoring relationship, then, is just one of the many relationships of the mentor-student relationship. Many questions about mentoring still remain (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). What should mentors do? What do they actually do? What do students learn as a result of being mentored?

Some authors (e.g. Tauer, 1996) emphasized the idiosyncratic nature of the mentor-student relationship. She found that the district/school culture surrounding the mentor program to have a significant influence on the mentor-student relationship. This relationship evolves in highly unpredictable ways. Tauer argued that those designing such programs should emphasize creating the optimal context for positive relationships rather than attempting to mandate specific dimensions of the relationships. It is important that mentors be trained in specific skills.

The Search Institute Study Saito and Blyth (1992) of the Search Institute in a study of mentoring noted that the ingredients for successful mentoring programs include:

1. The program provides appropriate screening, matching, and training of mentors.

2. The program provides adequate support and communication structures.

3. The program provides opportunities for social activities.

4. The program ensures a good match between mentor expectations and program goals.

5. The program communicates appropriately with the family.

Saito and Blyth (1992) described the traditional mentoring program along six dimensions:

1. The Structure of the Relationship

2. Minimum Length of Commitment

3. Intensity of Relationship

4. Nature of the Activity

5. Activity Location

6. Supervision

Saito and Blyth's (1992) conclusions were the following: When the nature and location of activities are unspecified by the program, extensive screening and matching is critical. Training is important when the program goal is remedial (e.g. academic tutoring or increasing social skills). Their most important finding was that mentoring is a win-win situation. The mentor wins, the student wins, and society wins.

Mentoring Characteristics Tuckman (1996) described some of the attractive mentoring characteristics of his mentor, Dr. Robert Gagne when Tuckman was a research assistant to this famous professor of educational psychology. Tuckman was surprised that Gagne treated him as his equal, that he was always generous with his time, that he continued to help his students even when they were no longer his students, that his mentor's influence was not due to any authority he possessed, that he showed no inclination to dominate others, that he was not comfortable with public accolades, and that he was a shy person in public.

Calabrese (1996) described in vivid terms what a mentor meant to him:

> What images invade my mind when I think of a mentor? Is it the image of someone who chooses to assist me, to open doors that normally would be closed? Is it the image of the sage, someone who shares a bit of wisdom that is reserved for the elite? Is it a friend who is committed to my well being? Is it the guide who helps me map out my journey? (Calabrese, 1996, p. 44.)

Calabrese (1996) continued describing in great detail about the qualities of a mentor: The mentor's view of life was inclusive and expansive. "Mentoring is a core part of their lives because it identifies that which they feel is central to the meaning of their existence" (p. 45). Mentors do not select out certain individuals for the mentoring. They do not select out special individuals. They simply mentor "a human being who happened along their path." Mentoring is a "heart to heart" relationship. His mentor, Calabrese wrote, "has a sincere interest in me as a human being. He continued to describe them as:

- builders
- nurturers,
- guides,
- opener of doors.

Calabrese provided a list of many of the desirable characteristics of mentors. Some are listed below.

MENTOR
BY
R. L. CALABRESE (1996)

Each projected a sincere interest in me as a human being.

Each was a person for whom life suggested openness, growth, and development.

Each held to a set of personal standards that never wavered.

Each believed in the concept of inclusivity.

Each was a person of character.

Each was a craftsperson.

Research on Dropping Out of School

A recent article by Garnier, Stein, and Jacobs (1997) described dropping out of high school as a multiply-determined process with influences beginning in childhood. Approximately 11% of the population aged 16 to 24 had not completed high school and were not enrolled in school (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1994), and approximately 14% of every class does not graduate from high school (Dryfoos, 1990).

Early Childhood Factors. Garnier et al. (1997) found that early family factors directly predicted high school dropout. Such factors as school performance in grade 1, early family stress, and child drug exposure. Living in families with a nonconventional lifestyle (single mothers, nonlegally married families, communes and group living families) was associated with dropping out later in life. These children are likely to experience multiple problems that are associated with achievement and social problems. Frequent changes, separations and divorce, single parenthood, financial difficulties, and drug use are some of the problems. These types of stressful life events have been found to have negative effects on children's well being (Garmezy

& Rutter, 1983). These researchers have also found that in nonconventional families many parents brought meaningful values and purpose to risky, stressful practices including family lifestyle arrangements. In addition to framing the meaning of family events, values are an integral part of knowledge and memory. Thus strong values commitment and a sense of meaningfulness and purpose regarding family circumstances have been found to be associated with a lower probability of dropping out. Child drug exposure leads to teen drug use, which leads to dropping out. Socioeconomic status is positively related to cognitive ability, school performance across grades and leads to dropping out. And early childhood family stress leads directly to dropping out in high school.

Many of these early family factors can be affected by programs. Family stress, student achievement, child drug exposure, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Family lifestyles can be modified.

Middle Years. Cumulative family stress, lower high school achievement and motivation, lower sixth-grade school performance, and adolescent drug use were associated with a higher probability of dropping out. Research on dropouts has focused on individual factors such as cognitive ability and early school achievement, retention, inconsistent attendance, and failing courses. Recently Mensch and Kandel (1988) identified adolescent drug use as an additional factor influencing high school dropout.

Mentoring as an Intervention. Mentoring is one of the few direct interventions that has the potential of increasing student performance, reducing family stress, and raising student achievement. It can improve student attendance, improve the probability of passing courses, and reduce the threat of retention. Indirectly it can assist in avoiding drug use. With all of these encouraging factors of mentoring, it has become one of the most important educational tools of the decade.

Research on Parent Involvement

Mentoring programs often attempt to involve parents in support of the mentoring. Parents are invited to meetings at the schools. Schools have involved parents, more or less successfully over the years. Much research literature exists on parents and schooling. Recently a useful article appeared in the *Review of Educational Research* in 1997 by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) discuss stages of parent involvement.

Recent research by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) has provided some insight into reasons why parents become involved in school. These reasons are arranged in a hierarchy of three levels. Level 1 consists of three basic reasons for parents to become involved in school:

- Parent's fundamental belief about their relation to their child's education.
- Parent's belief about their efficacy if they become involved in school.
- General invitations from the school, the parent's child and others to become involved.

Level 2 describes the ways that a parent chooses to become involved:

- The parents' skills, knowledge, and interests relate to the way that parents become involved.
- The demands on the parents time, and the specific invitations to become involved in specific activities.

Level 3 consists of type of involvement of parents:

- their modeling,
- their activities to reinforce the school's activities, and
- parental instruction in support of the school.

A complete outline of this article on parent involvement is provided in Appendix A.

# 2.0 PROJECT SOAR

Project Description

Project SOAR (Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal) provides academic and personal mentoring and family support services to at-risk middle and high school students in six schools of the Tucson Unified School District (Catalina High School, Pueblo High School, Tucson Magnet High School, Doolen Middle School, Mansfeld Middle School and Wakefield Middle School), Sunnyside Unified School District (Sunnyside High School, Desert View High School) and Flowing Wells Unified School District (Flowing Wells High School). A total of 95 participants or students are served by the program (60 in TUSD schools, 20 in SUSD schools, and 15 in FWSD schools), and a total of 95 mentors participated in Project SOAR. This resulted in a win-win situation because students benefitted through the relationship and mentors also benefitted from the relationship.

The Project SOAR has three components: an 8th grade component, a 9th grade component, and a Teen Parent component. These components were implemented in the following schools.

Table 1
Project SOAR Components

| Component | School District | Schools |
|---|---|---|
| 8th Grade | TUSD | Doolen Middle School<br>Mansfeld Middle School<br>Wakefield Middle School |
| 9th Grade | TUSD | Catalina High School<br>Pueblo High School<br>Tucson Magnet High School |
| | SUSD | Sunnyside High School<br>Desert View High School |
| Teen Parent | FWSD | Flowing Wells High School<br>Flowing Wells Junior High School |

Teen Parent Component. The Flowing Wells Teen Parent program was implemented at Flowing Wells High School with one of the participants coming from the Flowing Wells Junior High School. This program was developed to provide mentoring support similar to the Eighth and Ninth Grade components in the middle and high schools, but it included support services necessary for teenage mothers. This program provided academic and mentoring support but also included personal support from mentors who understood and were willing to assist the teenage mothers with their unique needs. The overall goal of the Flowing Wells Teen Parent program was to ensure that the teen mothers succeeded academically and completed their high school education. Additionally, a goal was to assist the young mothers to consider higher education as an option for their futures.

Eighth and Ninth Grade Components. Project SOAR focuses on eighth and ninth grade students who have great potential for success and who face many of the social and academic challenges of today's world. Participating students may be at academic risk, but they have potential to succeed.

## Funding

For the 1996-1997 school year the Coca-Cola Foundation funded Project SOAR for a total of $100,000 for the TUSD schools as part of the Career Corridor Project. The Arizona Supreme Court, Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund, funded Project SOAR for $20,756 to TUSD for the 1996-97 school year. The Arizona Supreme Court also funded $35,000 to Sunnyside Unified School District for Project SOAR to begin January 1997. It also funded $35,000 for Project SOAR to begin at Flowing Wells Unified School District for the 1996-97 school year. See Table 1. Project SOAR was first funded in the Spring of 1994 to the College of Education of the University of Arizona and the Tucson Unified School District.

Table 2
Project SOAR Funding 1996-1997

| School District | Funding Source | Students | Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| TUSD | Coca-Cola Foundation | 60 | $100,000 |
| | Arizona Supreme Court Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund | | $20,756 |
| SUSD | Arizona Supreme Court Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund | 20 | $35,000 |
| FWSD | Arizona Supreme Court Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund | 15 | $35,000 |
| TOTAL | All External Funding | 95 | $190,756 |

Note. TUSD = Tucson Unified School District, SUSD = Sunnyside Unified School District, FWSD = Flowing Wells Unified School District. Enrollment in the FWSD program may vary from 10 - 19.

Goals

The goal of project SOAR was to contribute to the increase in the number of students who achieve success in their academic and personal lives. Parents are also encouraged to become more involved in the education and enrichment of their children.

- To increase the number of students who achieve success in their academic and personal lives, and
- To provide valuable training and pre-professional University students.

**Evaluation Objectives:**

Evaluation Objectives.

Objective 1. Decrease the dropout rate of participating students in each of the schools by ten percent during the 1996/1997 school year, and increase the attendance by five percent. Data source: TUSD Dropout and Suspension Reports, Attendance and School Enrollment Data.

Objective 2. Increase academic achievement of participating students as demonstrated by improved report card grades and g.p.a.; and improved essential skills raw score gains. Data Source: TUSD Grade Reports and Report Cards, Essential Skills Testing, Project SOAR three-week Progress Reports and School Attendance Data.

Objective 3. Promote development of self-confidence and self-esteem by providing skill building experiences and positive social interactions. Data Source: Project SOAR Student Survey provided at end of each semester.

Objective 4. Improve parent and student communication as demonstrated by 100 percent of parent-student teams attending a minimum of three meetings during the semester. Data Source. Parent Meeting Attendance Sheets, Project SOAR Parent Survey provided at the end of each semester.

Objective 5. Encourage Career Exploration for 100% of participating students through internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing and collaboration with the state and local School to Work efforts. Data Source. Placement in internship, apprenticeships and educational employment, Project SOAR Student Survey at end of each semester.

Objective 6. Increase by 15 percent the number of students considering higher education as demonstrated in a student survey. Data Source. Project SOAR Student Survey.

# 3.0 PROGRAM

Program Description

Project SOAR is a one-to-one academic mentoring program which began in 1994. In the 1996-97 school year this program was implemented in middle schools and high schools in the Tucson Unified School District, Flowing Wells Unified School District, and the Sunnyside Unified School District. See Project SOAR Abstract in Appendix B. In this section of the report activities of the program will be described

Project SOAR is a 15-weeks per-semester one-to-one mentoring project implemented in the Fall of 1996 and in the Spring of 1997. Students are provided 5-hours of mentoring each week. In addition to this there are meetings between the mentor and parents at regularly scheduled times. Students, mentors, and team leaders attend regular meetings of project in addition to the mentoring.

Project SOAR pairs middle and high school students in the selected schools with University of Arizona pre-professional education and university students who provide one-to-one academic and personal mentoring. Overall, the program is supervised by a Director and a Coordinator. Team Leaders supervise and coordinate Mentors who work, one-to-one with middle school and high school students. Team Leaders and Mentors receive regular training in Project SOAR. They are matched with students on a variety of criteria so as to insure the optimal mentoring relationship. In spite of the matching and supervision, sometimes the one-to-one mentoring relationships do not work out.

In the Spring of 1997 a new program of Project SOAR was implemented in Flowing Wells Unified School District called the Project SOAR Teen Parent Program. This program was designed for teenage parents in the middle and high schools of the Flowing Wells Unified School District who needed academic assistance. Mentors provide tutoring, encouragement and support. Lorri Foster, an adolescent counselor at Palo Verde Psychiatric Hospital conducts the meetings of the Teen Parent Program. This program was designed to teach teen parents some of the following topics:

- to value themselves,
- to improve their decision making skills,
- to learn about becoming assertive,

- to become empowered,
- to learn about the consequences of their actions, and
- to learn about the value of education.

Mentor/Student Relationship.

The important relationship is that between mentor and student. That relationship involves confidence, trust, sharing and understanding. See experiences as a mentor described in Reflections on Project SOAR by Project SOAR Mentor of the Year in Appendix C.

In Reflections the mentor describes her experiences as rewarding and meaningful. The mentor describes her efforts to get her student to take academic risks, to overcome the student's past negative experiences in the classroom. As a mentor she needed to have persistence, perseverance, patience, reliability, dependability, and availability. The mentor's reward was to see her student's pride in her work, her renewed motivation, her higher grades, and her social, emotional, and academic improvement.

Student Selection

1. Counselors, teachers, and administrators at selected middle schools and high schools are contacted by the Director or Coordinator of Project SOAR who describe the purpose of Project SOAR. The opportunities and benefits of the project to the student are described to the school personnel. See student recruitment memorandum in Appendix D.

2. Counselors, teachers, and administrators then recommend students to be students in Project SOAR on the basis of any or all of the following factors:

a. The potential of the student to benefit from a one-to-one mentoring relationship.
b. The student is considered as "at-risk" because of low academic achievement, or other standard at-risk criteria.
c. The need of the student for academic or personal mentoring.

3. Students are interviewed by the Director or Coordinator and tentatively selected for Project SOAR if they determine the student meets the above characteristics and the student is willing and interested in participating in the project.

4. Parent approval is obtained.

5. Final selection of the student for Project SOAR is made.

Mentor/Team Leader Selection

1. Pre-education students at the University of Arizona are informed about the availability of mentor positions in Project SOAR.

2. Students complete an application for Project SOAR. See Mentor Application in Appendix E. The applicant is provided information about the duties and responsibilities of the Mentor. See Appendix F for the Mentor Job Announcement. See Appendix G for Mentor Job Description and Duties.

3. Students successfully complete an interview with the Director or Coordinator where their questions are answered and their expectations are discussed.

4. Team Leaders are generally selected from experienced Mentors. See Appendix H for Team Leader Job Description and Duties.

In spite of the careful selection of mentors and the training and support of mentors, they sometimes decide to leave Project SOAR. In the 1996-1997 school year, 21% of the mentors dropped out of the program during Fall 1996 or the Spring 1997 semester.

There is a matching of mentor with student in Project SOAR on the basis of gender, ethnicity, ability of the mentor to speak the first or second language of the student. Sometimes other factors are used for matching as when a mentor has the same interest in sports as the student. Other areas of matching may occur depending on the mentor and student such as hobbies, music, science, travel or any other areas that may facilitate and foster the new mentoring relationship.

Program Activities

Individual Mentoring and Academic Support.

Each Project SOAR student was assigned to a pre-professional University mentor. Each mentor provided students with academic assistance for five hours per week for 15 weeks per academic semester in the Fall 1996 and 15 weeks in the Spring 1997 while serving as a friend,

personal support, and guide. This academic assistance had the form of tutoring, and classroom/individual support. Mentors met informally with students in addition to the academic tutoring support.

Skill Building Experiences.

Mentors and students participated in a series of interactive workshops focused upon topics such as the "Economics of Staying In School" and "College Bound". The first workshop explores the personal and societal impact of the lack of a high school education, while helping students learn the value of education and setting goals. Each of the workshops covered age appropriate activities that illustrate the repercussions of dropping out of school. The topics included sessions on Success, Benefits of Staying in School, the Cost of Dropping Out, Exploring Careers and the Effects of Drug Use and Abuse on Life. College is an option for students. Steps are explained to students about how to pursue a college education.

Parental Participation.

Parents, students, and mentors participated in a five-session interactive Parent and Student Series entitled Healthy Families in the Fall 1996. In the Spring 1997, the Healthy Life Styles was led by Lori Foster. These meetings were five sessions per semester per school. The series was conducted by a professional family life educator. Topics included communication, family boundaries, standards, discipline, monitoring, peer influences, decision making, assertiveness, planning, self-esteem, and relationships. Parent meetings occurred every two or three weeks, often in the evenings from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. See Healthy Families agenda in Appendix I.

In the Fall of 1996 the Healthy Families series was led by Kathy Busch, an Instructional Specialist with the University of Arizona's Cooperative Extension program and a Home Economist. In the Spring 1997 the Healthy Life Styles series was developed and led by Lori Foster.

Summer Internship or Apprenticeship/Employment Participation

Project SOAR students were given the opportunity to participate in a summer program on the University of Arizona campus. Students were encouraged to select summer programs that met their interests such as those offered in the Departments of Chemistry, Astronomy, Fine Arts, Biology, Education, and Engineering. Project SOAR personnel helped students to find employment for the summer 1997.

Social Activities.

A series of social events were scheduled which provided opportunities for mentor, student, and program staff to interact with one another in unstructured environments. These events included cultural, sports, and other social events.

Mentor Training and Management.

Project SOAR mentors received training every two weeks on issues relevant to working with at-risk middle and high school students and their families. Every mentor meets 15 minutes per week with the school team leader to discuss progress and other issues which may arise with students. This is an opportune time to problem-solve. Team leaders compile weekly reports for program administrators. A two-day training took place prior to beginning of mentoring and continue bi-monthly throughout the program. Topics included the Responsibilities of Mentoring, Diversity and Cultural Issues, Problem Solving, Adolescent Sexuality, Drug Use and Abuse, and Gangs. Mentors are given guidance about appropriate activities, and the parameters of a successful mentoring relationship. See the contents of the Mentor Training Guide in Appendix J, Mentor Notes in Appendix K.

Every mentor meets 15 minutes with individual school team leaders to discuss progress and other issues which may arise with students. This was an opportune time to problem-solve. Team leaders compiled weekly reports for Project SOAR administrators.

# 4.0 EVALUATION RESULTS

Evaluation Design

Data used in the evaluation of Project SOAR were collected at different times during the academic year (Fall 1996 and Spring 1997). Other data were collected for administrative records, administrative supervision, and mentor-tracking of student progress. The data mentioned in the following table are only the data used in the present evaluation of Project SOAR.

Table 3
Evaluation Data Collection in Project SOAR 1996-1997

| Data Source | Fall 1996 | Spring 1997 |
|---|---|---|
| Student Evaluations | — | X |
| Mentor Evaluations | — | X |
| Parent Evaluations | X | X |
| Teen Parent Evaluations | X | — |
| Parent Attendance | X | X |
| Student Quarterly Grades | X | X |
| Student Attendance Rates | X | X |
| Student Dropout Rate | X | X |
| Student Suspension Rate | X | X |

Note. "X = data collected, "—" = data not collected.

The evaluation of this program used as its guidelines the Evaluation Objectives which have been specified in Project SOAR proposal 1996-1997. Different sources of data used in Project SOAR have different strengths and different weaknesses as evidence of the effectiveness of Project SOAR. Each data source presents some useful information about Project SOAR. Objective data have a great probative value to determine program effectiveness. Subjective data

inform the decision maker about experiential and subjective aspects of the program. Often subjective data will identify areas which were not considered in planning the evaluation.

Subjective Data. Students, mentors, and parents are provided an opportunity to evaluate the program. These evaluations by students, mentors, and parents are subjective data. Students, at the end of the year in May 1997 think back and estimate their grade at the beginning of Project SOAR and then they estimate their grade at the end of Project SOAR. Parent and students signed their names to the evaluations where there are places for them to sign their names. Thus there is lack of anonymity in the evaluations of the mentors and parents..

In spite of the limitations of subjective data, these three sources of information provide participants to evaluate the program, these sources identified many important facets of the program which could be improved, and identified many of the strengths of the project. Furthermore, the evaluations by the parent, the mentor, and the student allowed those individuals who were most directly affected by Project SOAR to speak out about the program. All of the evaluations collected by Project SOAR staff, whether positive or negative, are analyzed for the evaluation.

Objective Data. The attendance data, suspension data, and school grades which were obtained from school records are considered objective data. These data were recorded by individuals who had no reason to approve or disapprove of Project SOAR, and in many ways the data were not collected with any knowledge of the individual's participation in Project SOAR.

Interview data were obtained by the two evaluators in the course of meeting with mentors, students, parents, teachers, and school administrators. These data are subjective because they are the personal observations of evaluators, yet they have objective characteristics because the evaluators do not have vested interests in the project. They have a higher level of credibility because the evaluators are not affected by the program and the evaluators do not have any special reason to provide positive observations about Project SOAR.

## Participants

Project SOAR focused on at-risk students, with an emphasis of inclusion of all students. Particular emphasis was made to include ethnic minority students in the mentor/student relationship. Partners with Project SOAR are the Tucson Unified School District, Sunnyside Unified School District, and Flowing Wells Unified School District. Other partners include the Tucson Police Department's School Resource and Family Services Units, the Pima County

Juvenile Court Center, Junior Achievement, and local mental health counselors. The percentages of ethnicity of the students was, 25% White/Anglo, 9% African American, 56% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 6% Native American. A total of 48% were boys and 52% were girls.

The percentages of different ethnic groups participating in Project SOAR 1996-97 are presented in Figure 1.

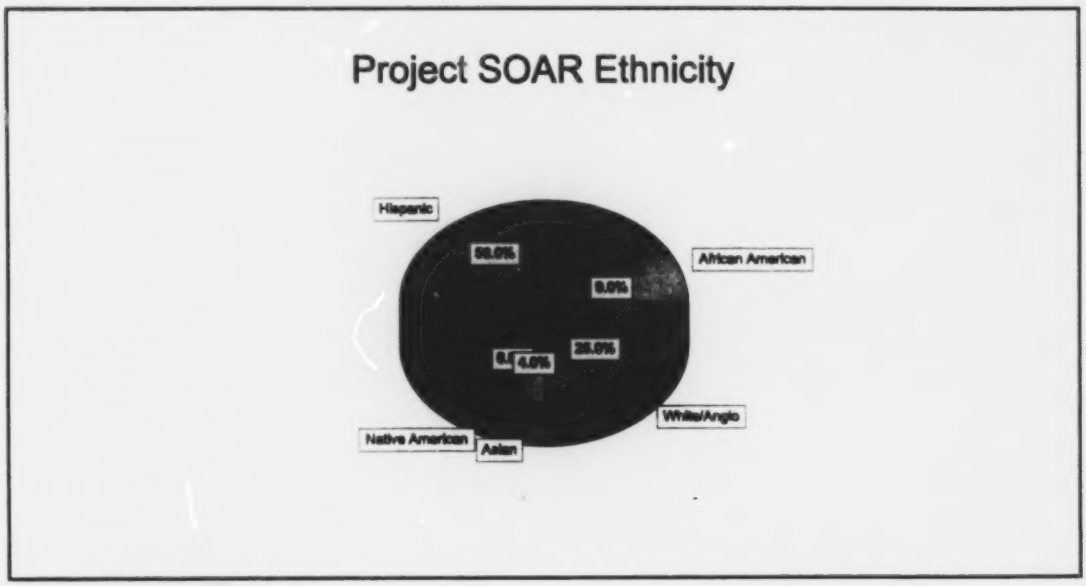


**Figure 1**. Ethnicity.



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Objective 1. Decrease the dropout rate of participating students in each of the schools by ten percent during the 1996/1997 school year and increase the attendance by five percent. Data source: TUSD Dropout and Suspension Reports, Attendance and School Enrollment Data.

**Objective 1 was met. Suspension rates decreased, as reported in school records and attendance rates increased as documented in school records. The 10% criterion was not quite met. The attendance rates did increase by 5%.**

Suspension.

TUSD suspension rates of students were examined to compare the suspension rates in the 1995-1996 school year with those of the 1996-1997 school year. The results show a reduction in the suspension rates for students in Project SOAR. For example, for all of students, the suspension rate in 1995-1996 school year was 23% and in 1996-1997 it was 17%. These results are what would be hoped for in Objective 1. See Table 4.

Table 4.
Suspension Rates of Students

| Gender | 1995-1996 | 1996-1997 | Decrease |
|---|---|---|---|
| Boys | 31% | 24% | 7% |
| Girls | 16% | 10% | 6% |
| Total | 23% | 17% | 7% |



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Figure 2 shows that suspension rates have dropped from the 1995-1996 school year to the 1996-1997 school year. The percentage drop for boys was 7% from 31% to 24%. For girls it was 6% from 16% to 10%.

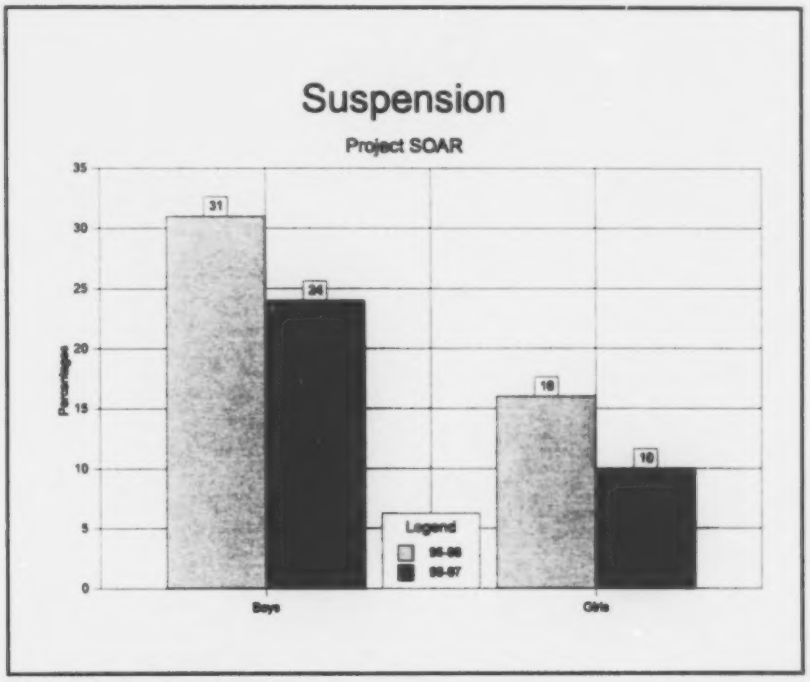


Figure 2. Suspension Rates

Attendance. TUSD attendance rates were examined for students to compare the attendance rates in 1995-1996 school year with the 1996-1997 school year. The results show an increase in the attendance rates students. For example, for boys the attendance rate was 86% in the 1995-1996 school year and increased to 93% for the 1996-1997 school year. For all of the

students, the attendance rate increased from 87% to 92% percent during the course of Project SOAR. The criterion was that attendance rates would increase by 5%. This was met by the boys and not the girls. Overall, though, when boys and girls were combined together, the objective was met. See Table 5.

Table 5
Attendance Rates of Students

| Gender | 1995-1996 | 1996-1997 | Increase |
|---|---|---|---|
| Boys | 86% | 93% | 7% |
| Girls | 87% | 90% | 3% |
| Total | 87% | 91% | 5% |

The data are evidence of the impact of Project SOAR, but one must remember that there are many programs and many school district efforts to increase student attendance and reduce suspensions. For example, there has been an effort by TUSD to find alternatives to suspension, and to have principals implement innovative methods to increase attendance and reduce suspensions. Further more the six largest school districts in the Tucson area have collaborated in a federally funded project called Project Hogar to implement programs to reduce violence, reduce suspensions, increase attendance, and reduce dropouts. These programs have included the funding of PeaceBuilders, Our Town Program and Parent Connection Programs. In summary, there are multiple factors involved in the improvement of attendance and the reduction of suspensions. These data suggest the Project SOAR was one of the factors in the improvement of attendance, and the reduction of suspensions. See Figure 3.

Figure 3 depicts the attendance rates of students in Project SOAR for the 1995-1996 and 1996-1997 school years. The rate is the percent of days attended at school. One can see that the attendance has increased from one year to the next. These results are what would be hoped for in Objective 1.

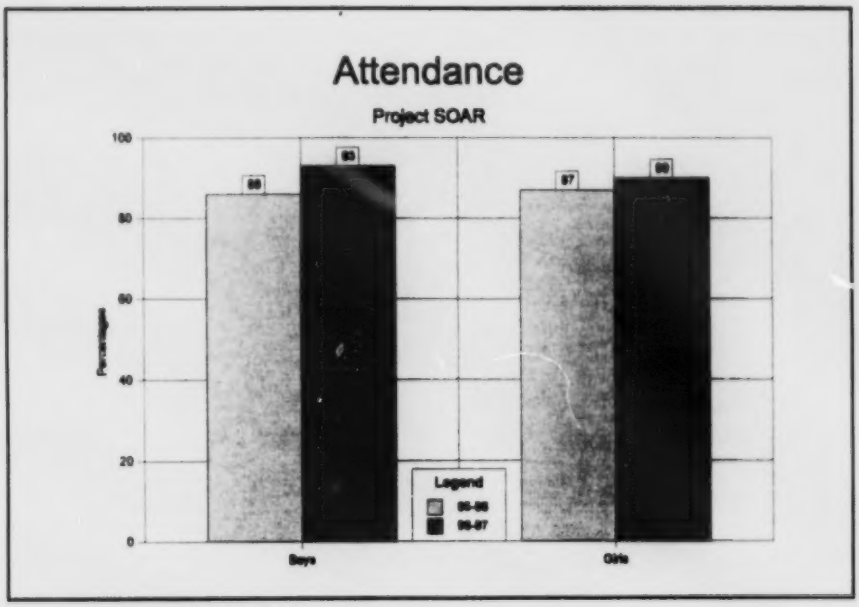


Figure 3. Attendance Rates.

Table 6
SUSD Percent Attendance

| Characteristic | Fall 1996 | Spring 1997 |
|---|---|---|
| Attendance | 84% | 81% |

The percent of days attended dropped from Fall 1996 to Spring 1997 semesters among ninth grade students in the SUSD Project SOAR program.

Table 7
Attendance and Discipline Referrals for Teen Parent Program

| Characteristic | Fall 1996 | Spring 1997 |
|---|---|---|
| Attendance | 96% | 98% |
| Number Referrals | 10 | 14 |

The percent of days attended by the students in the Teen Parent Program increased from Fall 1996 (96%) to the Spring 1997 (98%). The number of referrals increased from 10 during the Fall 1996 to 14 during the Spring 1997.

Objective 2. Increase academic achievement of participating students as demonstrated by improved report card grades and g.p.a.; and improved essential skills raw score gains. Data Source: TUSD Grade Reports and Report Cards, Essential Skills Testing, Project SOAR three-week Progress Reports and School Attendance Data.

**Objective 2 was not attained. Student grades obtained from school records decreased from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 in the Fall 1996.**

Student Grades

TUSD. TUSD student GPAs were available for the two quarters of the Fall 1996 (Quarter 1 and Quarter 2), and for the two quarters of the Spring 1997. Attendance information was not available from TUSD. It was expected that student grades as reported by their teachers would improve from Quarter 1 to Quarter 4. Each quarter was eight weeks long, and the effects of the program should be to improve the students grades. Grades were converted so that 4 = A, 3 = B, 2 = C, 1 = D, 0 = F and then averaged to obtain a GPA.

Students reported in Table 8 are only those students in Grade 8 who had GPAs for all four quarters, and were enrolled in Project SOAR all four quarters from the Fall 1996 to the Spring of 1997. See Table 8.

Table 8
Average GPAs by Grade

| Grade | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 8 | 1.76 | 1.79 | 1.86 | 1.86 |
| Grade 9 | 1.65 | 1.53 | 1.26 | 1.13 |
| Total | 1.7 | 1.64 | 1.52 | 1.45 |

Note. 20 eighth graders, and 26 ninth graders.



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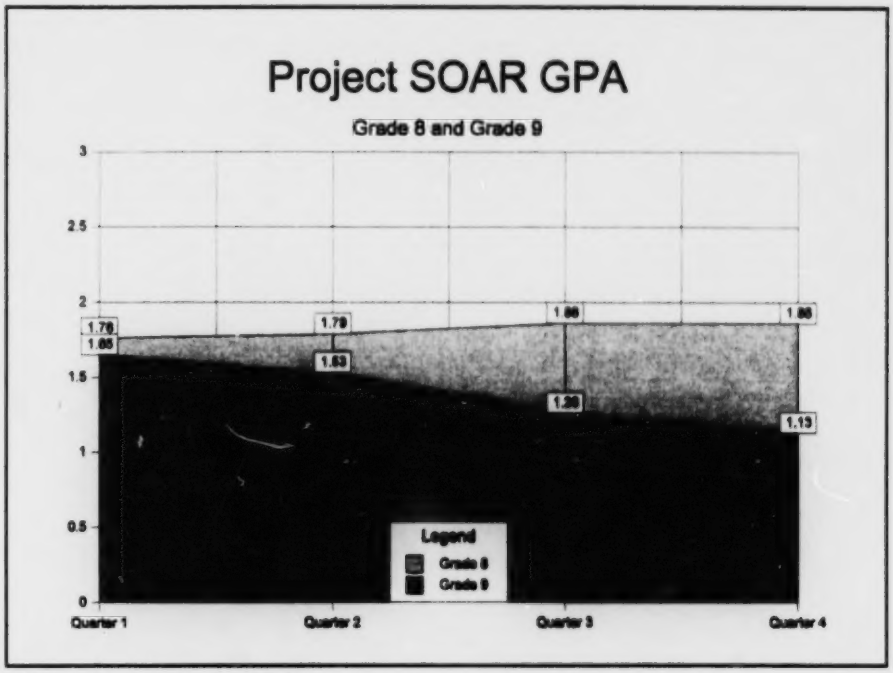


Figure 4. Quarterly GPAs

One may observe the mean GPAs of Grade 8 Project SOAR students show a slight increase across quarters, 1.76, 1.79, 1.86, 1.86, and the mean GPAs of Grade 9 Project SOAR student show a clear drop across quarters, 1.65, 1.53, 1.26, 1.13 A statistical analysis using repeated measures analysis of variance showed that there was a statistically significant pattern of divergence of the two groups across the four quarters, $F(3, 132) = 4.01$, $p = .009$. This suggests that the eight graders may be making a slight improvement whereas the ninth graders were making a drop in GPAs.

These results suggest several inferences. The impact of Project SOAR on eighth graders may be greater than on ninth graders. These results apply to students who continue in Project SOAR for the full year, and do not dropout. Eighth graders may be more open to the mentoring of Project SOAR than ninth graders who face more challenges to their learning.

When the GPAs of eighth and ninth graders are combined as they are in Table 4 they show a slight decline, and for these students, the Objective is not attained.

Sunnyside Unified School District. Project SOAR began in the SUSD in January 1997 at Sunnyside High School and Desert View High School. From school records student attendance and GPA was available for the evaluation. The Fall 1996 attendance and GPAs provided a type of pretest -- i.e. a measurement before the project began. The Spring 1997 attendance and GPAs obtained at the end of the semester in June provided a type of posttest -- i.e. a measurement after the project had completed.

The GPA of the Fall 1996 (1.72) declined to the Spring 1997 (1.34). These results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9
GPA of Project SOAR Students
in Sunnyside Unified School District

| Characteristic | Fall 1996 | Spring 1997 |
|---|---|---|
| GPA | 1.72 | 1.34 |

Teen Parent Program. The Project SOAR Teen Parent Program was implemented in the Fall 1996 and the Spring 1997 with students from Flowing Wells Opportunity School and Flowing Wells High Schools. Project SOAR students were enrolled in grades from Grade 8 to Grade 12. GPAs were computed for students from their grades on school records for the Fall 1995 and Spring 1996 school year when the students were not in Project SOAR and for the Fall 1996 and the Spring 1997 when the students were in Project SOAR. Only the GPAs of the nine students who had GPAs for the four semesters were included in this analysis. It was hoped that students grades would increase during the 1996-1997 school year when they were participating in Project SOAR.

Table 10
GPAs for Teen Parent Program SOAR Students for Four Semesters

| | Fall 1995 | Spring 1996 | Fall 1996 | Spring 1997 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teen Parent Students | 2.41 | 2.69 | 2.56 | 2.27 |

GPA Conversion Scale: A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F = 0.

Student achievement did not continue to increase during the Fall 1996 and Spring 1997 while students were in the Project SOAR Teen Parent Program. This is difficult to attribute the failure of the GPAs to increase in Fall 1996 and Spring 1997 to Project SOAR because these two semesters are when students are coping with pregnancy, with a reorientation of their lives, with great concern and stress related to their future. Many observers would marvel that the students did as well as they did in the Fall of 1996 and the Spring 1997. Objective 2 was not attained by the students in the Teen Parent Program.

GPAs should be reconsidered as an evaluation measure for students in the Teen Parent Program. Considering the tremendous stress on the students at this time in their life, some other measure of project success should be devised.

Essential Skills Testing which is testing conducted at the school districts consists of tests which are given at all grade levels. Unfortunately the tests are not norm-referenced and they are not linked by any scale. So the Essential Skills Tests at one grade level cannot logically be compared with the Essential Skills Tests at another grade level For that reason, the Essential Skills tests were not used in the evaluation of Project SOAR.

The Stanford 9 Achievement Test was administered in Grades 2-12 in the Spring of 1997. In the Spring of 1998 it will be administered in only four grade levels. If one or more of those grade levels correspond to Project SOAR students, then the Stanford 9 might be use in the evaluation of Project SOAR. It should be remembered that a standardized norm-referenced test is very remote from the one-to-one mentoring of students in Project SOAR. These standardized norm-referenced tests are designed to measure generalized achievement in reading, language, and math, and other academic areas as a product of family, culture, schooling, intelligence, and a multitude of influences. Therefore, the Stanford 9 would have major limitations and interpretive problems if it is used next year in the evaluation of Project SOAR. Nevertheless, administrators might want to look at the results of standardized testing while considering the numerous limitations of this type of measurement for evaluation purposes.

Three-Week Student Progress Reports were considered for the evaluation of Project SOAR. Extensive discussions were conducted between the evaluator and the Project SOAR Director and Coordinator. It was agreed that the Three-Week Progress Reports results might be misleading if they were used in the evaluation of Project SOAR. The Progress Reports were often obtained by the students from their teachers. It was discovered that some of the students changed the grades given to them by the teachers.. Some teachers would not put grades on the Progress Reports. It was concluded that the Progress Reports could not be relied on for reliable data. So, the Progress Reports were not utilized in the evaluation of Project SOAR. See Appendix L for a copy of the Student Progress Report.

Students Estimating their Grades

A total of 48 students completed the Student Evaluations in May 1997. In the evaluations students estimated their grades before participation in Project SOAR and after participating in Project SOAR. Students were also asked to assess various aspects of their study skills, themselves, and school. See Appendix M for a copy of the Student Evaluation Forms.

Over half of the students who estimated their grades in English, Math, History, and Science indicated that their grades after participation in Project SOAR were higher than before participation in SOAR. For example, in English, out of a total of 43 students, 26 (60%) indicated that their grades after Project SOAR were higher than before Project SOAR. Similarly in Math, 25 (54%) out of 46 students who were taking Math had improved grades. In History, 18 (75%) out of 24 respondents and in Science 23 (55%) reported their grades had improved. See Table 11.

Table 11
Student Estimation of their Class Grades Before and After Project SOAR

| Classes | Improved | Same | Worse |
|---|---|---|---|
| English | 26 | 10 | 7 |
| Math | 25 | 13 | 8 |
| History | 18 | 4 | 2 |
| Science | 23 | 13 | 6 |

Note. "Improved" means class grades improved from before to after Project SOAR.

Conclusions about Objective 2.

Student records from the First and Second Quarters in the Fall 1996 show student grades dropping. Student estimation of their grades showed improvement.

When students estimated their class grades in the Student Evaluations of Project SOAR, between 54% and 75% of the students estimated that their class grades had improved from before- to- after Project SOAR. At the time students estimated their grades, they did not know what their grade would be at the end of the semester.

The evaluators examined the data of the school records in the Fall 1996 which are objective, school-based data. The evaluators also know that over half of the Project SOAR students estimated that their grades had improved. Student self-reported data which is subjective, and is suspected of having a self-serving bias did not have the probative value of the objective school records from the Fall of 1996. Therefore, it was concluded that Objective 2 was not attained.

Objective 3. Promote development of self-confidence and self-esteem by providing skill building experiences and positive social interactions. Data Source: Project SOAR Student Survey provided at end of each semester.

**Objective 3 was attained. There were regular activities and educational meetings with the students and Project SOAR. In addition the documentation of the mentoring by the mentors also substantiated that students were developing the abilities, strengths, and characteristics mentioned in Objective 3.**

Regular meetings for the students with Project SOAR personnel were held. Often specific topics were discussed. At other times there were social activities. In the Student Evaluations students reported liking very much the social activities. Students expressed appreciation that they could meet other people. Some comments were "It gives people an opportunity to meet people", "Because you will have a lot of fun", "You meet different people", "They were neat especially when your mentor is around", "They were fun but sometimes serious", and "I got to see all the kids I know from other schools plus we have lots of fun." These were examples of students comments about the social activities. No one expressed negative comments.

Students attended a Leadership Retreat. Students reported enjoying the retreat. Some of their comments were "There were so many different people of so many different cultures. I loved hearing about other people's lives", "It was fun", "It gave me an opportunity to meet new people, to feel that I can do anything. Everybody gave me comfort and support no matter what.", "And I found it was so interesting because being pregnant makes you feel you can't have any fun, but coming here was just a lot of fun." Students reported that they learned a lot at the retreat and had new experiences of support, understanding, and friendships.

In the Student Evaluations, student reported how Project SOAR had changed them. Some of the comments were, "Project SOAR has changed me but my mentor changed me the most. She's great. She made me want to go to college. I myself wanted to too. But it's just what I think of it now.", Project SOAR has changed "My attitude toward school", and "It made me believe in myself. It also made me actually go and socialize with people that I never knew. Which for me was a good and important thing." Student Evaluations were completed only at the end of the Spring 1997 semester.



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Objective 4. Improve parent and student communication as demonstrated by 100 percent of parent-student teams attending a minimum of three meetings during the semester. Data Source: Parent Meeting Attendance Sheets, Project SOAR Parent Survey provided at the end of each semester.

**Objective 4 was not attained. A total of 100 percent of parent-student teams did not attend a minimum of three meetings.**

In order to attain the objective, it would be necessary for 100% to appear for parent and student attendance at least three times during the five meetings. The percentages of parents guardians, or sibling attendance were 50%, 52%, 54%, and, 55%. Data were not collected on student attendance at the meetings. Objective 4 was not met. See Table 12.

Table 12
Attendance of Parents (or Siblings) at Student-Parent Meetings
in the Fall 1996 & Spring 1997

| Groups | | Meetings | | | | | | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Parents & Siblings | n | 143 | 78 | 78 | 71 | 74 | 77 | 76 |
| | % | 100% | 55% | 55% | 50% | 52% | 54% | 53% |
| Mentors | n | 138 | 128 | 117 | 115 | 114 | 113 | 117 |
| | % | 100% | 93% | 85% | 83% | 82% | 81% | 85% |

Data were collected on the Student-Parent meetings using Parent Meeting Attendance Sheets. For each meeting, an "X" was used to indicate if attendance was by parent, grandparent, foster parent, or sibling of the student. There was no way to determine if a sibling or a parent was attending. Data were collected from the Fall 1996 and the Spring 1997 and combined and presented in Table 12.



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Objective 5. Encourage Career Exploration for 100% of participating students through internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing and collaboration with the state and local School to Work efforts. Data Source: Placement in internship, apprenticeships and educational employment, Project SOAR Student Survey at end of each semester.

**Objective 5 was attained. Project SOAR focused on encouraging career exploration among the students.**

Objective 5 specifies the encouragement of career exploration of students. The observational, interview, and anecdotal evidence indicated that the encouragement was done. All parents, students, mentors received extensive listing of summer opportunities in education and employment.

The data source in the objective indicates that the placement in internships, apprenticeships, and educational employment would be documented. The actual placement of students in internships was not done and so one cannot determine if 100% of students were actually encouraged.

The evaluation objective had two parts. Part 1 indicates that Career Exploration would be encouraged. From documentation of the program, the educational activities of the program, and the student surveys, Part 1 of the objective was met. Part 2 indicates that the attainment of this objective would be documented with various data sources. That was not done. Unfortunately, some of these data would not be available until after the completion of the 1996-1997 Project SOAR.



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Objective 6. Increase by 15 percent the number of students considering higher education as demonstrated in a student survey. Data Source. Project SOAR Student Survey.

**Objective 6 was attained. Project SOAR students reported better attitudes towards college.**

Students were surveyed in the Student Evaluations. One part of the Student Evaluation asked questions about Self and School. Question 6 was obtained responses related to Objective 6. Those data are given in Table 13. It shows that 41% of the student reported that their attitudes toward collect was better. This was greater than the 15% criterion of Objective 6, and so the objective was attained.

Table 13.
Question 6: Self and School
*Because I was involved in Project SOAR, my attitude towards college is better, same, or worse.*

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Better | 21 | 41% |
| 2. Same | 11 | 22% |
| 3. Worse | 1 | 2% |
| 4. Don't Know | 4 | 8% |
| 5. No Answer | 14 | 27% |
| | 51 | 100% |



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Student Evaluations

Student estimation of their classroom grades was reported under Objective 2. There was other information in the student evaluations. Students also reported in their evaluation whether they believed that different aspects of their study skills were "Better", "the Same", or "Worse" after participation in Project SOAR. See Appendix M for a copy of the Student Evaluation form.

Over half of the students reported the following:

- their ability to study was better,
- their ability to prepare for a test was better,
- their math skills were better, and
- their science skills were better.
- Nearly half of the students reported their language skills were better. The two areas where substantially less than half of the students reported improvement was in their ability to read and their skills in social studies.

Students also reported whether their attitudes toward themselves and school were "Better", "the Same", or "Worse".

- Over half of the students reported their attitude toward themselves was better,
- their attitude towards their school was better,
- their attitude towards doing homework was better,
- their attitude towards their grades was better,
- their attitude toward high school was better, and
- their attitude toward college was better.

Students also evaluated many aspects of Project SOAR activities. Student's written comments indicated:

- positive evaluations of Project SOAR parent activities,
- an appreciation of social activities, and leadership activities,
- students reported frequent meetings with their mentor,
- regular assistance from their mentor, and
- many positive comments about their mentors. See Appendix N for a summary of Student Evaluations compiled by project SOAR staff.

Mentor Evaluations

Mentors gave positive evaluations of all aspects of Project SOAR. One mentor wrote that she made a very important contribution to her student, and wrote "She realizes that she must work hard to get what she wants." "I think that I helped her through a lot. It seemed like she told me everything." My student "thinks twice about violence now and knows what might be required to 'succeed' in life." "Showing her the U of A really opened her eyes to what the world can be like", "I am not sure how much of her outlook changed but we have had many conversations about these issues and hopefully something I said made a difference." "I believe my students outlook on life and education improved." The following is a summary of the answers the mentors gave to the Mentor Evaluation. For a copy of the Mentor Evaluation form see Appendix O.

- 79% responded that they felt as though they were successful in their mentoring relationship with their student
- 98% reported they felt as though they were called upon to play roles other than those associated with academic support such as guidance, sponsor, confidant, advisor, role model, friend, or parent.
- 81% responded they were able to make real contributions to their student in improving their outlook toward life, education, and prevention of violence.
- 86% responded their felt as though they were provided with adequate training and a clear understanding of their role as a mentor.
- 74% responded they were able to develop a relationship with the parent or guardian, the student and the rest of the family.
- 93% indicated their match with their student was a good one, and 21% responded that the match could be improved.
- 88% indicated that they were able to address specific topics such as goal setting, the importance of having an education, and current problems that the student had to deal with.
- 58% indicated there were barriers to their successful mentoring, and these barriers interfered with their relationship with their student.
- 93% responded that they felt that the support mechanism provided by Project SOAR was adequate.
- 93% indicated that the weekly meetings, individual meetings, staff meetings, and social gatherings were useful in their role as a mentor.

For a summary of the Mentor Evaluations compiled by the Project SOAR staff, see Appendix P.

Parent Evaluations

A total of 32 parents completed the Project SOAR Parent Evaluations at the end of the Fall 1996 and the Spring 1997. Parents appeared to positively support Project SOAR with positive responses to all questions with yes or no responses. Some of the parents responded in Spanish as well as English. See Appendix Q for a copy of the Parent Evaluation forms.

In the evaluations, parents had an opportunity to indicate topics that they would like (and not like) for the Parent and Student Meetings. Topics rated highest (indicating most desired) were 1) Help your child succeed in school, and 2 ) Coping with angry children. Lowest (or least desired) ratings were given to 1) Is your child using drugs? and 2) Preventing underage drinking.

Parent Comments. This program has "strengthened our belief in the manner we are raising our children and has broadened our vision and hope for the future." My child "is more anxious to learn". My daughter "is trying to right the wrong decisions concerning her education goals". One parent recommended, "Have parents meet potential mentors in early stage of program for better interaction and positive communication on selection of participants for match-up with students." "Thank you for the help and guidance you have all provided to our family."

"Me gusta que me hijo participó en este programma porque es muy educativo" (I like it that my son participated in this program because it is very educational). Another parent wrote that he/she benefitted from the program "porque como padres podemos tener más comunicación con nuestros hijos" (because as parents we can have more communication with our children). In response to the question "Have you seen positive changes in your child?, one parent responded, "Siento que es más responsable" (I feel that he/she is more responsible). One question on the Parent Evaluation was "How was your interaction with your child's mentor. Were the interactions helpful?" The response was "Sí, es una persona que ayudó a mi hijo (Yes, he/she is a person who helped my son). Were the Parent and Student Meetings useful to you and your child? A parent answered, they helped her "comprender a mis hijos y ayudarlos" (to understand my children and to help them). One parent reported that the Parent and Student Meetings most useful were those about "drogas y violencia doméstica" (drugs and domestic violence). When asked, How could the Parent and Student Meetings be improved, a parent wrote, "Todo está perfecto" (All is perfect). A parent was asked, would you recommend this program to other students and parents? "Sí, positivamente que sí" (Yes, positively).

The following is a summary of the parent responses to the Parent Evaluation:

- 98% reported that they felt as though their child had benefitted by participating in Project SOAR.
- 93% reported that they felt as though they benefitted through their participation in Project SOAR.
- 91% reported they had seen positive changes in their child such as behavior, attitude, outlook on life or in education.
- 93% reported that their interactions with their child's mentor were helpful.
- 76% reported they had noticed a change in their child's grades.
- 84% responded that the Parent and Student Meetings were useful to them and to their child.
- 78% reported they would be interested in participating in family activities other than the Parent and Student Meetings.
- 93% wrote that they would recommend Project SOAR to other students and parents.

See Appendix R for a summary of the Parent Evaluations compiled by Project SOAR staff for the Spring 1997.

Teen Parent Program Evaluation

Teen parent evaluations were collected from six teen parents at the end of the Fall 1996. In the Spring 1997 there was no evaluation of the Teen Parent Program. There was an evaluation of the parent component of Project SOAR in the Fall 1996 and the Spring 1997, but there was no systematic data collection of evaluative feedback from the teen parents in the Spring 1997.

From the Fall 1996 the teenage parents completed the Teenage Parent Support Group Meetings Evaluation which asked respondents to rate the usefulness of the weekly topics on a scale 1 = Not At All Helpful to 5 = Very helpful/useful. See Table 14.

Table 14
Teenage Parent Support Group Evaluations Fall 1996

| Meeting Topic | Average |
|---|---|
| 1. Pregnant Too Soon -- Now What? | 3.50 |
| 2. Stress & How to Deal With It | 4.50 |
| 3. Parenting Issues | 3.50 |
| 4. Family of Origin | 4.25 |
| 5. Making a Difference | 4.00 |
| Would you recommend this support group to other pregnant/parenting teenagers? | 100% |

According to the rating scale which ranged from 1 to 5, a value of 3 would indicate "undecided". An average of a 3 would be midway between "Not at all helpful" and "Very helpful/useful". The average response to Topics 1 and 3 were 3.50 and these averages suggested an undecidedness about the helpfulness of these topics. Topics 4 and 5 had averages of 4.25 and 4.00 respectively indicating somewhat helpful. The average of 4.50 indicated the topic was very helpful. All of the respondents (100%) answered "Yes" to the question, "Would you recommend this support group to other pregnant/parenting teenagers?"

Respondents indicated other topics they would like to see presented were: How to get along with relationships, How to deal with other parents, Labor and Delivery. One respondent gave the following comments: "I felt it was great information for pregnant teens". "I enjoyed the

group discussion and felt the techniques were helpful." For Week III when there was discussion of anger management, the respondent wrote "expand more on bonding and anger management".

Evaluator Visitations and Interviews

One of the evaluators visited Doolen Middle School -- one of the Project SOAR middle schools in order to interview students, mentors, parents and school personnel. Various aspects of Project SOAR were discussed. Though most of the reports were positive, some members of each group indulged in introspection concerning their roles in the program. They focused on things that they might do to improve their contribution to the program.

Project SOAR received positive comments from members of the four groups interviewed -- students, mentors, parents and school personnel. They cited numerous instances of program success. Several school personnel indicated that the students selected for Project SOAR were those students who would "fall through the cracks" rather than those with great needs. Those with great needs often have many special services at their disposal. Therefore, Project SOAR students were those that could benefit uppermost from Project SOAR because state and federal funds were not available to support them.

Workshops. Through interviews and visitations one evaluator noticed that parents are encouraged to participate in program activities yet few elect to attend. This is apparent to a person observing the workshops. It should be noted that there were parents present. However, the number was very small -- it appeared that parents constituted only 10 percent of the attendance. The reason given for not attendance is a conflict with work. School personnel felt that parent attendance was necessary. At some schools Student Parent Meetings were held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Parents indicated that some times were not good for them, and some days were not good for them.

Parents seemed to be grateful for the mentors who kept them informed of their child's progress. Those parents who are not fully involved were encouraged to support their children in every way possible.

Workshop topics focused on issues that were of concern to the students' development. Workshops on drug education and assertiveness were among the topics heard by evaluators on their visitations. Most significant was the environment in which the workshops occurred. In the workshop on assertiveness, students participated with few, if any, inhibitions. The students

seemed eager to express their opinions and to present anecdotes. In this non-hostile and non-judgmental environment, all present participated. Not one of the twenty-six persons, teachers, students, mentors, parents or Project SOAR staff members were reluctant to make comments. Several groups of participants continued to discuss assertiveness long after the session ended.

The workshop on drug education was not the same as that of assertiveness. It lacked the level of participation. Students were reluctant to speak openly on how they would react in a situation in which drugs were being used by a friend and how they would go about removing themselves from the situation. Comments made after the workshop revealed that some of the students withheld information that might have made good issues for discussion.

School Personnel Interviews. School personnel included aides, teachers, counselors, and administrators. Those interviewed indicated that students placed in Project SOAR should only be those who had no other support systems available to them. Personnel felt that "borderline" students should be the ones that are selected for Project SOAR because these students do not have any other resources. School personnel felt that in the past, those students selected for Project SOAR were those with severe academic, social and behavior problems.

The selection criteria of Project SOAR actually give the flexibility for student selection to counselors and other school personnel. Students who are in need of mentoring services are eligible to be selected for Project SOAR. Personnel of participating schools are given guidelines for student selection which allows selection of students that might profit from a mentoring program that requires student reliability and cooperation. Student selection for Project SOAR begin with the school personnel.

School personnel felt that the mentor's time should be focused on academic achievement. They felt a greater proportion of the mentor's time should focus on academic achievement, and not on social skills and student attitude. Additional comments were that the mentor should spend time in the classroom with the student and confer with the student's teachers and learn the student's areas of academic weaknesses.

School personnel at this school were not aware that the major focus of Project SOAR is on academic achievement. Mentors have the flexibility to mentor students on social skills and attitudes. Of course, some mentors implement the mentoring in an attempt to meet the needs of the students. At times the mentor can find it difficult to meet the social needs of the student and the academic needs. This in spite of the guidelines of Project SOAR that specify academic mentoring as the major focus.

# 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Since 1994 Project SOAR has developed into a mature, and effective mentoring program which provides most of the desirable qualities of a mentoring program. It is dynamic because it is always being reviewed by mentors, team leaders, the Coordinator and Director so as to improve the program. It is mature in that it is supported by guidelines, frameworks for action, documentation, and highly capable individuals. It is judged effective by most people contacted by the evaluators who have been aides, teachers and administrators.

The reputation of Project SOAR is of the highest level. Independent interviewing by the evaluators of the program have found that school personnel -- teachers, aides, administrators -- in schools where Project SOAR has been implemented have nothing but praise for the program.

Mentors are the primary agents of Project SOAR. They are well-trained, are carefully monitored by team leaders, and are considered excellent role models and educators of the students. Mentors are well-prepared to provide academic counseling to the students.

Mentors often go beyond mentoring. They talk with students in the evening, they become confidants to the students, they help the students adjust to social relations in school and in Project SOAR, and they often visit students and parents at home. All of this in addition to providing academic assistance to the student of approximately five hours per week.

Project SOAR is well-positioned to provide statewide leadership in the development of other mentoring programs like Project SOAR. This leadership is possible because of the proven effectiveness of Project SOAR, the organizational maturity, and the mentoring structure of the program.

Recommendations

1. Team Leader Evaluations. It is recommended that formal written evaluations be obtained from the Team Leaders in Project SOAR. Team Leaders are close to the project, and their evaluation would be valuable. Already written evaluations are obtained from the students, the mentors, and the parents.

2. Improve Evaluation Validity. The objectivity, credibility, and reliability of the evaluation of project SOAR can be improved in several ways.

a. The evaluations should be anonymous. At present mentors and parents sign their names to their evaluations which reduces the validity and credibility of the evaluation.

b. The evaluations should be completed when Project SOAR administrators are not present. The evaluations should be collected by mentors or team leaders. The evaluation should be delivered directly to the evaluators for analysis.

3. Student Progress Reports. The Student Progress Reports should be discontinued or improved. Student Progress Reports are currently obtained by the student from the teacher. They appear to be unreliable. Project SOAR administrators state that the Progress Reports are unreliable and should not be used for the evaluation. A major problem is that students are asked to obtain their own grades from their teachers every 3 or 4 weeks. Some students have altered their grades. Some teachers refuse to give grades out to the students for the Progress Report.

The position of teachers who do not want to give out grades every three weeks has some merit. Dr. Powers was a middle and high school teacher for 12 years. Teachers have to give out grades for students every quarter (i.e. 8 weeks). They often do not have enough information to give out a grade every three weeks. They may not want to commit themselves to a grade every three weeks. Teachers are already burdened with a lot of paper work.

It is recommended that the Student Project Progress Reports be collected at the end of each quarter at a time that teachers are completing their quarterly reports. These reports should be sent directly to the program evaluators who will enter these data in a database. This is especially important because some participating schools either will not/or cannot supply these data for the evaluation.

It is recommended that the Progress Report include only recording of the teachers grade and three questions that would be rated by the teacher about the students attitude, effort, and class work. At present teachers do not participate in the evaluation of Project SOAR. That is why the Student Progress Reports are so important.

4. Develop New Measure of Student Progress. It would be better to develop a new measure. The new measure could be very simple. It could ask the teacher five questions which could be rated at the beginning of the program in September, at the end of the first, second, third, and fourth quarters of the school year. This would not be a great burden on the teacher. Most teachers would not have more than a few of the Project SOAR students in their classroom. Schools have about 10 Project SOAR students. A teacher would have 1-3 Project SOAR students in class. This measure would have several advantages:

a. The teacher is thought to be an objective person who has no particular reason to please Project SOAR or the student.

b. The classroom teacher is the one who is closest to the student academically and is most likely to observe changes in the students' achievement, attitude, attendance, and motivation. These are areas where Project SOAR is most likely to affect students.

b. The mentors or the team leaders could collect the measurements. They could be examined by the Project SOAR students, team leaders, and other personnel for what merits they have. Then they would be delivered to the evaluators who would create a database of the information.

5. Parent Participation. Efforts could be made to improve parent participation. There are approximately 95 mentors serving 95 students. One would expect approximately 95 parents or foster parents who potentially could be active in Project SOAR. Only 21 parent evaluations were obtained. This suggests that parent participation could be improved.

Parent participation is complex. Some factors were mentioned in the review of recent research on mentoring and parent involvement. Efforts could be developed using some of the ideas mentioned above such as improving parent knowledge of their importance in their child's education, what they can do to help in the mentoring program, and to give them a sense that they can aid in the improvement -- called self-efficacy.

Being sure to have outstanding speakers, outstanding topics, speakers with multicultural

backgrounds, some speakers who can speak Spanish, and men and women speakers. Some parents have indicated some days are better than others. Of course, this will be a great challenge because there may be scheduling problems, and difficulty in finding outstanding speakers.

6. Teen Parent Program. Efforts should be made to develop a special, and perhaps significantly different, evaluation of the Project SOAR Teen Parent Program. Some of the goals and objectives of this program differ from the regular Project SOAR. Many of the goals are the same. Yet, teen parents have unique challenges in school and society, and it would be appropriate to have an evaluation tailored for that program.

7. Work Closely with Evaluators. It is recommended that Project SOAR staff work closely with the evaluators to develop all evaluation and data collection instruments. It is also important to involve the evaluators in project planning and the evaluation design.

8. Reluctance of Schools to Provide Data. Some schools are either unwilling or unable to supply attendance, dropout, suspension, and quarterly data on students participating in Project SOAR. It should be made clear to these schools that a condition of participating in Project SOAR is the willingness and ability to provide the necessary evaluation data.

9. Modify Objectives. Now that Project SOAR has the experience of seeing the evaluation results of their six objectives, it would be appropriate to modify the evaluation objectives so that the criteria is within range of achievement. The objective could continue to be a challenge, but it could be written so that is was within reason of attainment.

10. Improve Knowledge about Mentoring Subjects. Specific information from the mentor about specifics of the mentoring. For example, it is important to know what school subjects the mentor is helping the student on. Those are the subjects that the evaluators would expect to improve. For example, if the mentor is helping a student with English homework, then the evaluation would focus on improvement in English and not mathematics or science. That would be more likely to find improvement in grades if there is a focus of the evaluation on the subjects that are mentored.

If Mentors are helping students in English, then that must be documented. This must be conveyed to the evaluation because those are the areas that are most likely to show improvement.

11. Training Should Emphasize Importance of Attendance and Not Dropping Out. Training of the mentors should emphasize issues in student attendance, student dropping out and student

suspensions. These are three areas that are important to the funders of Project SOAR and they are important areas of the evaluation. The mentors should learn about danger signs of dropping out, how to emphasize the importance of attendance. They should be told the importance of not being suspended. And the mentors should be told how important it is that they convey this information to the students implicitly or explicitly.

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# APPENDIX A

## ELEMENTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL

## Elements of Parental Involvement in School

Kathleen V.Hoover-Dempsey, & Howard M. Sandler (1997).
Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children's Education?
Review of Educational Research, 67(1), 3-42.

A recent article by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) provides some clarification on the reasons parents become involved in school. These elements are arranged in three levels. This hierarchy provides a framework for a greater involvement of parents in school activities..

**Level 1: Parent's Decision to Become Involved in School.**
A. Parental Role. Parents have different beliefs about their relation to their children's education. They have different notions about their role and the school's role. Their ideas differ about their responsibilities as a parent for their child's early education. In turn, these beliefs are often influenced by parent's beliefs about child development and child-rearing.
B. Parental Self-Efficacy. Parents have different beliefs about their efficacy for helping their children succeed in school. They have different degrees of confidence that they can help their children with school work. They have different feelings of competence as their children progress to higher grades. They have different beliefs that they can influence the school through school governance.
C. General Invitations. Parents have different perceptions that the child and the school want them to be involved. Children's desires for their parent's involvement in school is an important factor in a parent's decision to become involved in school. Other important factors are an inviting school environment, and teacher behaviors that are welcoming and facilitating. It is often important whether these invitations are written or verbal. Another influencing factor is a child's level of performance in school.

**Level 2. Parent's Choice of a Form for Involvement.**
A. Parent's Skill. Parent's select activities in school according to their specific skills, knowledge, and interests. A parent with an interest in teaching may become active as a teacher's aide; those with interests in leadership may become involved in the school council. Others may be interested in parental governance meetings.
B. Demands on time. The mix on demands on the total parental time and energy (family, employment, etc) will affect a parent's ability to be involved in school activities.
C. Specific Invitations. Specific invitations to parents for involvement in specific school activities will often attract parents to school.

**Level 3. Type of Parental Involvement.**
A. Modeling. Parental modeling in their lives is an important influence on the development of the same qualities in their child.
B. Reinforcement. Parents reinforcing the educational activities of the school has a strong influence on the development of the child.
C. Instruction. The parents direct instruction of the child is a direct and powerful influence on the child's development.

# APPENDIX B

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

# Project SOAR - Coca-Cola Mentoring Program
## Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal
### A Partnership between the University of Arizona - College of Education and Tucson Unified School District


**Project Abstract**

The University of Arizona, College of Education's, Office of Multicultural Recruitment and Retention and Tucson Unified School District's (TUSD), School Safety and Violence Prevention Unit are working in consultation with the Tucson Police Department and the Pima County Juvenile Court Center to administer an extensive mentoring program for at-risk students. Initiated during the Spring of 1994, Project SOAR or Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal targets ethnically diverse students, with primary focus upon Hispanic, African American and Native American students in Mansfeld, Doolen and Wakefield Middle Schools and Pueblo, Catalina and Tucson High Schools. Initial support for Project SOAR came from the Arizona Supreme Court's Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund and the National Education Association's Student Programs. The project is now funded by The Coca-Cola Foundation as a part of their "Career Corridor Initiative."

The students recruited to Project SOAR are those who are determined to be exhibiting at-risk behavior. These at-risk behaviors include academic failure, chronic truancy, behavioral problems, continued contacts with the school administrator and preliminary referrals to the juvenile justice system. Project SOAR is designed to encourage these students to focus upon their education and personal values through an extensive mentoring and academic support system. Project SOAR activities consist of:

- **Individual Mentoring:** Each student is assigned a pre-professional education undergraduate or graduate student who serves as their personal mentor, friend, support and guide throughout the program.
- **Academic Support:** Each mentor, in turn, supports their student in their academic work, through tutoring and homework assistance. Mentors also work with teachers to determine areas which need reinforcement.
- **Skill Building Experiences:** Students participate in workshops that provide them with information on future educational opportunities, college entrance requirements, career exploration, study skills, and computer utilization. These workshops ir clude a four-part session on "The Economics of Staying In School" by Junior Achievement and the "College Bound" program by the McBride Foundation.
- **Leadership Enhancing Skills:** Students are provided the opportunity to build their leadership skills through activities that assist them in identifying their personal and educational goals, building self-esteem, and developing cultural awareness and pride in themselves. A Leadership Retreat developed and administered by the student mentors is also provided to all participating students.
- **Parental Participation:** Parent and Student Meetings, entitled "Healthy Families" are provided by a Family Life Educator. The meetings include sessions on Communication, Family Boundaries such as Standards, Discipline, Monitoring, Peer Influences, Decision Making, Assertiveness, Planning, Self-Esteem and Relationships. Each meeting is held in the evening and begins with a family meal followed by an interactive workshop for parents, students and mentors.
- **Lecture Series:** Outstanding minority role models are invited from the community to speak to the students to share their personal and professional experiences.
- **Social Activities:** A series of formal and informal social events introduce students to key individuals on the University campus and in the community. Opportunities for mentors to socialize with student participants are provided in unstructured social experiences around Tucson. These experiences include cultural, sports and other social events.
- **Summer Internship or Apprenticeship Participation:** Each student is provided the opportunity to participate in a summer internship or apprenticeship that meets his/her personal career interests. Students may participate in any of the University of Arizona summer programs offered in the Departments of Chemistry, Astronomy, Fine Arts, Biology, Education, and others.


For more information you may contact Regina Serrano at the University of Arizona-College of Education, Office of Multicultural Recruitment and Retention (520) 621-7865.

# APPENDIX C

## REFLECTIONS OF PROJECT SOAR

# REFLECTIONS OF PROJECT SOAR

ANGIE ISAAC
Project SOAR Mentor of the Year 1997

The past year working with Project SOAR has been a rewarding experience for both me and my student. I have learned a great deal from working with my student and through my active participation as a mentor. I found this experience to be rewarding because all our effort and hard work paid off. That is, my mentee was able to graduate with her class, her long term goal for the year.

It was important to me that I was paired up with someone from a similar ethnic background because by looking similar, we were comfortable with each other from the beginning, resulting in a relationship that was very close and personal. In fact, we became very good friends. At one point my student told me that I was her very best friend and the only person she could trust.

Trust is a key ingredient to a rewarding and meaningful mentoring relationship. If trust is not part of the mentoring relationship, it is hard to establish and maintain a worthwhile relationship. Without trust it may be hard for the student to be willing to take academic risks. Taking such academic risks may make the student feel very vulnerable and they will need someone who they trust to support them in order to try.

Many of these students have had mostly negative experiences in the classroom -- the school setting. Therefore it is important that the mentor and the mentee have a good relationship, trust, and believe in each other, because unfortunately many seem to have given up on the mentee. The sad thing is that the student often knows this and gives up on himself or herself. it is up to the mentor to understand these risks and help change this kind of thinking.

It was also important to have persistence, perseverance, patience, to be reliable, dependable and available when working with my student. It was important to follow through when working with my student, especially in the beginning when she tested me on my trustworthiness. it was also important that I be understanding and forgiving when she failed to show up for a meeting with me or ditched school. It was also important to be honest with her when I felt disappointed when she did not show up.

I also found it very helpful to go to her classes and tutoring sessions to see what was going on, what her teachers were like, who her friends were, to observe her behavior, and study habits in the classroom. This helped me better understand what she was experiencing, what kinds of issues she was facing as an eighth grader, and how to help her develop better study skills, listening skills in the classroom, and stand up/advocate for herself when a teacher, for example was going too fast, being cruel, or telling her to take a make-up test when she had not prepared for it yet.

It was very rewarding to see my student proud of her own work. Although it was difficult

at time to get her motivated, it was nice to see her work pay off, earning her a 'B' on an assignment, and the smile on her face with this accomplishment. She was always eager to tell me when she received a high grade on an assignment because she knows how proud I am of her and how much I appreciate and value education.

I often saw my student using the same strategies I use to study and learn new material, (i.e. color coding, drawing pictures, and other visual aids) which was reinforcing for me. I knew then she was listening to what I said, trying it out for herself, and I was having an impact on her life.

I truly believe I have made a positive difference in my mentee's life, not just academically but socially and emotionally. I achieved this by seeing her at least five hours a week, usually a lot more than that, gaining her trust, respecting each other, modeling the type of behavior that can lead to academic success, providing her with a listening ear, support, encouragement, and information about such things as college and future plans.

I know my hard work paid off when passing eighth grade looked very bleak for my student, and although she and her parents thought it better that she quit and just take her chances in summer school, we worked on her late work anyway, raised her failing grades to passing and she was able to graduate. I also know my hard work was appreciated by the Project SOAR staff because I received the Mentor of the Year Award for 1997.

# APPENDIX D

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT MEMORANDUM

College of Education
Office of the Dean

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ARIZONA.
TUCSON ARIZONA

PO Box 210069
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0069
Telephone (520) 621-1081
Telefax: (520) 621-9271

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 3, 1996

**TO:** Faculty in Wakefield, Mansfeld and Doolen Middle Schools, and Pueblo, Catalina and Tucson High Schools

**FROM:** Glenn Howell, TUSD, Violence Prevention Unit
Regina Serrano, College of Education

**RE:** Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal - Project SOAR

We are currently in the process of recruiting students to participate in Project SOAR or Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal. The program is funded by a grant from the Coca-Cola Foundation and by the Arizona Supreme Court and is a collaborative partnership between the TUSD Violence Prevention Unit, the College of Education, Office of Multicultural Recruitment and Retention, the Tucson Police Department and the Pima County Juvenile Court Center. Project SOAR is designed to encourage students to focus upon their education and personal values through an intensive mentoring and academic support system. We are looking for ten students in Wakefield, Mansfeld and Doolen Middle Schools, and ten students in Pueblo, Catalina and Tucson High Schools, a total of ten in each school, or 60 students to participate in Project SOAR. We would like to propose that faculty make recommendations of students who would most benefit from an intensive mentoring and academic support network. The following are criteria for nomination:

- Students must be in the eighth grade (for middle schools), or ninth grade (for high schools);
- Should have the potential to succeed academically, but may lack motivation or academic support;
- Students could have already been involved in the Juvenile Justice System, but have the potential to succeed academically; and
- Have the ability to succeed but need encouragement and could benefit from a positive role model.

Students must be committed and able to follow through with their obligation to the program as they will be expected to meet weekly with their mentor, attend lectures with parents or parent substitutes and be interested in participating in social activities in and about Tucson. Students who formerly participated in Project SOAR last semester are once again welcome to re-join the project.

We would like recommendations from faculty of students who fit the above criteria. Thank you for your interest and support of Project SOAR. We believe that through our combined efforts we can further assist young students to realize the benefits of education.

**Attachments:** Project SOAR Abstract
Project SOAR Student Recommendation Sheet

# APPENDIX E

## MENTOR APPLICATION

# Project SOAR Mentor Application

**Name**_____ **Date**_____ **Social Security Number**_____
**Date of Birth**_____ **Local Address**_____ **Zip**_____
**Phone Number**_____

**At which school would you prefer to work?** The TUSD Schools are Mansfeld Middle School which is located across from the University campus as is Tucson High School, Doolen is located at Country Club and Grant Road, Catalina High School is at Pima and Dodge, Wakefield Middle School is located at 6th Avenue and 44th Street and Pueblo High School is located at 12th Avenue and Veterans Blvd. Flowing Wells High School for the Teenage Parent Program is at Flowing Wells and Prince_____

_____

**What would be your second school preference?**_____

Class Standing_____ Ethnicity_____

**Please provide the following information about your education:**

| **Institution** | **Dates Attended** | **Degree/Major** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Do you speak any language fluently other than English, If so which?_____

**Please answer the following questions, typed on an additional sheet of paper.**

1. Discuss any multicultural experiences you have had with members of ethnic groups other than your own.

2. Describe any courses, volunteer and job experiences that you feel are relevant to this job.

3. Explain what has led to your interest in your particular major or specialization and what career goal you ultimately wish to pursue.

Please note that only completed applications will be considered. You will also need the following in order to be considered:

- Two letters of recommendation, at least one academic and one personal;
- Spring semester schedule; and
- A copy of your most current transcripts.

**Signature**_____ **Date**_____

## Application Deadline: January 17, 1997

# APPENDIX F

## MENTOR JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

# Project SOAR -TUSD and Flowing Wells

## Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal

## Mentor Job Announcement Spring 1997

The College of Education, Office of Multicultural Recruitment and Retention, Tucson Unified School District's Violence Prevention Unit and Flowing Wells School District are working in collaboration to offer mentoring opportunities to at-risk Middle and High school students in TUSD and teenage parents in Flowing Wells High School. Project SOAR will target ethnically diverse students, with primary focus upon Hispanic, African American and American Indian students. We will be mentoring students in Wakefield, Mansfeld, and Doolen Middle Schools, along with Tucson, Pueblo and Catalina High Schools in TUSD and teenage parents in Flowing Wells High School. The students recruited to participate in Project SOAR programs will be those exhibiting at-risk behaviors, such as academic failing, chronic truancy and behavioral problems at home and in school. Project SOAR is designed to encourage these students to focus upon their education and personal values through an extensive mentoring and academic support system.

## Duties and Responsibilities

Mentors will be asked to work individually with one middle or high school student in TUSD or one teenage parent in Flowing Wells High School. Responsibilities of the mentor will include:

- **Individual mentoring:** Mentors will serve as the students personal support, and provide academic assistance, friendship, and guidance throughout the program.
- **Academic support:** Mentors will work with their students to improve their academic progress in their core-curriculum classes.
- **Parental Component:** Mentors will also provide family support. Each mentor must be willing to work with parents, including providing home visits and participation in Parent and Student Workshops.
- **Individual and Student Evaluation:** Each mentor will report weekly and evaluate their students behavior and academic progress to their assigned Team Leader.

## Employment Dates

- **Training/Orientation:** Training will take place throughout the semester. A complete schedule will be provided at the time of hiring.
- **Work Schedule:** Mentors will begin working with students early in the semester for a total of five hours per week for 13 weeks.
- **Bi-Monthly Staff Meetings:** Mentors will be required to attend staff meetings on Fridays of every other week. It is during these meetings that mentors will meet, interact and work together to solve situations relating to the students.
- **Social Activities:** Mentors will be required to attend a minimum of two social activities for students, these will include sporting events, cultural activities and weekend activities.
- **Personal Commitment:** The nature of mentoring is such that once you have completed your paid five hours of work with the student, the job is still not complete. We would thus like to ask that mentors working with the project provide an additional volunteer commitment to the program and to the individual student if needed. This volunteer time could be anywhere from one to five hours per week.

## Additional Criteria for Selection

- An ability to relate to students from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds;
- Possess good oral and written communication skills; and
- Be committed and willing to work with a student and their families in order to make a difference in their lives.

Please submit the attached application to Regina Serrano, College of Education, Office of Multicultural Recruitment and Retention, Education Room 233 or Cristina Polsgrove in Education Room 227G. Any questions can be referred to 626-4922.

## Application Deadline: January 17, 1997

# APPENDIX G

## MENTOR JOB DESCRIPTION AND DUTIES

**Project SOAR Mentor**
**Job Description and Duties**

1. Provide academic support to assigned student through tutoring and classroom visits for a minimum of 5 hours per week.
   a. Mentors will meet with students at school and tutor in an academic setting, for example; the University of Arizona Library, Public Libraries, at school, in student's classrooms, or in the Project SOAR offices.
   b. Classroom visits are considered mentoring and are highly recommended. These visits will help mentors to get to know students and teachers.
   c. Mentoring is a 5-hour **academic** commitment. Visits to Malls, Parks, Movies, Restaurants, etc. are not and will not be counted as mentoring. Contact your Team Leader if you have any questions regarding mentoring.

2. Attend bi-monthly Mentor Meetings (see individual school schedule for dates).

3. Meet with Team Leader 15 minutes per-week to turn in Mentor Notes and provide an update on your student's academic progress and behavior.

4. Attend all Parent and Student Meetings. These take place five times during the semester (see individual school schedule for dates). Contact students and parents to remind them of the meeting and assist with transportation if needed.

5. Obtain "Student Progress Reports" from students once every three weeks. These should be turned in to Team Leader at Mentor Meeting.

6. Attend two social events during the semester with your student.

7. Assist Team Leader during Parent and Student Meetings, social events, and other program activities. This includes assisting with serving meals, cleaning up after activities, providing transportation if needed, and supervising students when on outings.

8. Meet or talk with parents or guardians of assigned student a minimum of once per week to determine progress that the student is making.

9. Mentors are encouraged to spend time above the five hours per week on a volunteer basis.

# APPENDIX H

## TEAM LEADER JOB DESCRIPTION AND DUTIES

## Project SOAR Team Leader
## Job Description and Duties

1. **Project SOAR Administrative Duties:**
   a. Assist Director and Coordinator with administrative duties associated with the program and with individual school paperwork;
   b. Meet at least 15 minutes per week with each mentor from the assigned school to review student progress and upcoming activities;
   c. Prepare weekly summary reports of individual "Mentor Notes." These are due each Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. for the previous week.
   d. Prepare for and coordinate Parent and Student Meetings at assigned school. This includes making arrangements for the ordering and pick-up of meals and supplies, contacting students and parents prior to each meeting, and monitoring student, parent, and mentor attendance at each meeting;
   e. Communicate with and inform parents, students, and mentors to remind them of program activities, meetings, social activities, etc.

2. **Team Leaders will ensure student progress by:**
   a. Meeting in person for 15 minutes weekly with each mentor;
   b. Collecting "Student Progress Reports" once every three-weeks from the mentor of each student with whom they are working;
   c. Meeting regularly with school liaison to inform them of Project SOAR activities and to discuss issues regarding individual students;
   d. Maintaining close contact with the parents and/or guardians of each student to determine areas that need attention.

3. Team Leaders will motivate, counsel, manage, and communicate with students, mentors, parents and school administrators.

4. Team Leaders will meet once each week with the Program Coordinator to discuss issues regarding their assigned schools, mentors, and students.

5. Team Leaders will attend and participate in a weekly planning meeting with Director and Program Coordinator.

6. Team Leaders will plan for transportation and make arrangements for social activities.

# APPENDIX I

## HEALTHY FAMILIES

# *HEALTHY FAMILIES*

## *PROJECT SOAR PARENT & STUDENT SERIES*

### *Wakefield Middle School & Pueblo High School*

### *FALL 1996*

The focus for Project SOAR's Parent and Student Series is Healthy Families. Through this series we will explore the issues that help us to strengthen our families. The series will be led by Kathy Busch. Kathy is an Instructional Specialist with the University of Arizona's Cooperative Extension program. She is a certified Home Economist and has extensive experience in working with families and students. We hope you will be able to join us on the following dates:

**September 19, 1996**
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**Let's Talk....Opening the Doors to Communication**
*In this workshop we will learn how we can strengthen communication in our families by listening and learning to express ourselves in positive ways. We will talk about how gender affects the way we communicate and how we can use verbal and non-verbal means to get our message across.*

**October 10, 1996**
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**Family Boundaries....Standards, Discipline**
*Every family has standards for behavior and rules as well as consequences when these aren't followed. This workshop will help us to identify the standards and rules that will help maintain a smooth-running home. We will learn how to establish expectations that are realistic and ensure that consequences are fair and consistent.*

**October 24, 1996**
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**Family Boundaries....Monitoring, Time at Home, Peer Influences**
*This workshop will help us to build on strategies discussed previously by looking at how to make rules work and how to solve probiems. We will also discuss how peer influences can affect a family's boundaries and how to resolve the conflicts that may arise as a result.*

**November 7, 1996**
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**Tools for Success....Decision Making, Assertiveness, Planning**
*Families make important decisions everyday. This workshop will discuss the steps in the decision-making process that will help us reach short and long-term goals. We will also look at what factors affect the decisions we make. We will explore how to weigh our options and evaluate resources.*

**November 21, 1996**
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**Tools for Success....Self-esteem & Relationships**
*The final workshop in the series will examine the importance of self-esteem in healthy families. Self-image begins in our families and affects our behavior as well as our view of the world around us. We will also look at strategies for building healthy relationships that empower us as individuals and enable us to achieve our family's goals.*

**ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN THE PUEBLO HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA LOCATED AT 3500 S. 12TH AVENUE**

***PROJECT SOAR IS A PART OF THE COCA-COLA FOUNDATION'S CAREER CORRIDOR INITIATIVE***

# APPENDIX J

## MENTOR TRAINING GUIDE CONTENTS

Project SOAR

MENTOR TRAINING GUIDE

1996-1997

1. Letter of greetings from the Dean and Assistant Dean of the College of Education

2. On Being a Mentor from the National Institute of Mentoring

   The Origins of Mentoring
   Meeting Student Proteges Informational Needs
   What is Mentoring?
   What does a Mentor do?
   What is the Purpose of Mentoring?

3. Mentoring Requirements

   Behavior/Discipline Policy
   Etiquette and Demeanor
   Progress Reports
   Parent/Guardian Contact Sheets
   Mentor Notes

4. Problem Solving

   The Helping Process
   Communication Skills
   Problem Solving

5. Articles

   How to Talk to Your Children by Richette Haywood, Ebony, October 1994
   Balance

6. Working with Project SOAR Parents

   Working with Parents
   Successful Parent Contacts
   Community Resource Guide
   Developmental Needs of young Adolescents
   Developing Self-reliance
   Positive Discipline Guidelines
   Guidelines for Empowering Teenagers

# APPENDIX K

# MENTOR NOTES

## Project SOAR Mentor Notes

**Student** _____ **Phone** _____

**Address** _____ **Zip** _____

**Mentor** _____

| Date | Length of Contact | Subject | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|

# APPENDIX L

# STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT

# Project SOAR Student Progress Report

Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____

The student is to have each teacher make the appropriate marks in each space and sign in the proper space at the **end** of each period. It is the **student's** responsibility to see that this form is completed and returned to the **mentor**.

| Period | Subject | Tardies | Days Absent | General Attitude | Behavior in Class | Grade to Date | Teacher's Signature |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | |

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Progress report requested by: _____

# APPENDIX M

# STUDENT EVALUATION FORM

# Project SOAR
## Student Evaluation
## Spring 1997

We hope that you have enjoyed being a part of Project SOAR. After all, this program was created for you! We would like to get your feedback about the project. Your feelings and ideas are very important to us. Please answer each question honestly; this is the only way we can make the program better. Thank you very much for your input. It was great having you in the program!

## GRADES

Please circle your current grade for each class. On the lines provided, answer this question: Have you improved, stayed the same, or done worse in each class?

| Classes | Before SOAR | After SOAR |
|---|---|---|
| **English** | A B C D F | A B C D F |
| Comments:_____ | | |
| **Math** | A B C D F | A B C D F |
| Comments:_____ | | |
| **History** | A B C D F | A B C D F |
| Comments:_____ | | |
| **Science** | A B C D F | A B C D F |
| Comments:_____ | | |
| **Spanish** | A B C D F | A B C D F |
| Comments:_____ | | |
| **Other**_____ | A B C D F | A B C D F |
| Comments:_____ | | |
| **Other**_____ | A B C D F | A B C D F |
| Comments:_____ | | |

## STUDY SKILLS

Please circle the answer that best describes your feelings now that you have participated in Project SOAR. Write your comments on the lines provided below:

| | | Better=1 | Same=2 | Worse=3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | My ability to study is.... | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Comments:_____

_____

2. My ability to prepare for a test is... 1 2 3

Comments:_____

_____

3. My ability to read is... 1 2 3

Comments:_____

_____

4. My social studies skills are... 1 2 3

Comments:_____

_____

5. My math skills are... 1 2 3

Comments:_____

_____

6. My language arts skills are... 1 2 3

Comments:_____

_____

7. My science skills are... 1 2 3

Comments:_____

_____

## SELF AND SCHOOL

Please circle the number that best answers this question: **Because I was involved in Project SOAR, my attitude towards...**

| | | Better=1 | Same=2 | Worse=3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Myself is... | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Comments:_____
_____

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | School is... | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Comments:_____
_____

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Doing homework is... | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Comments:_____
_____

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | My grades are... | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Comments:_____
_____

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. | High School is... | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Comments:_____
_____

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | College is... | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Comments:_____
_____

## PROJECT SOAR ACTIVITIES

1. Were the Parent and Student meetings helpful? Yes ___ No ___
Why or why not?

_____
_____

2. Which of the Parent and Student Meetings did you find most useful and helpful? _____
_____

3. What could we do to improve the Parent and Student Meetings? _____
_____
_____

4. Did you like the social activities? Yes ___ No ___
Why or why not?

_____

5. Did you like the Leadership Retreat? Yes ___ No ___
Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____

6. Has Project SOAR changed you in any way? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, how?

_____
_____
_____

7. The best part of Project SOAR was...

_____
_____
_____

8. The worst part of Project SOAR was...

_____
_____
_____

9. If I could make changes in Project SOAR, I would...

_____
_____
_____

## MENTOR

1. How often did you meet with your mentor?_____
_____

2. How long did your meetings with your mentor usually last? _____
_____

3. What did you and your mentor do together? _____
_____

4. Has your mentor helped you to look at school differently? Yes __ No __

How?_____
_____

5. Did your mentor help you to think about being more responsible in the decisions that you make? Yes __ No __

How? _____
_____

6. Did your mentor interact with your family? Yes __ No __

How?_____
_____

7. What did you like best about having a mentor? _____
_____
_____

8. What didn't you like about having a mentor? _____
_____
_____

Thank you for your comments. It has been a pleasure working with you this year. Please feel free to contact us at any time for further support, especially academic support. Remember you can do and be anything that you want to be!

# APPENDIX N

## STUDENT EVALUATIONS SUMMARY

**(Compiled by Project SOAR Staff)**

**Project SOAR - Student Evaluation**
**Spring 1997**

## GRADES

Students were asked to circle the grade they had in their classes before and after their participation in Project SOAR. Overall, students responded as follows:

| Improved | Stayed the Same | Worse |
|---|---|---|
| 36 | 9 | 5 |

## STUDY SKILLS

Students were asked to assess their study skills. Their responses were as follows:

| | | Better | Same | Worse |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | My ability to study is.... | 37 | 13 | 0 |
| 2. | My ability to prepare for a test is... | 26 | 22 | 2 |
| 3. | My ability to read is... | 18 | 31 | 1 |
| 4. | My social studies skills are... | 18 | 28 | 1 |
| 5. | My math skills are... | 27 | 21 | 0 |
| 6. | My language arts skills are... | 23 | 24 | 1 |
| 7. | My science skills are... | 25 | 20 | 2 |

## SELF AND SCHOOL

Students were asked to assess their feelings about themselves and school. They were asked to complete the following statement:

**Because I was involved in Project SOAR, my attitude towards...**

| | | Better | Same | Worse |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Myself is... | 38 | 15 | 0 |
| 2. | School is... | 30 | 23 | 1 |
| 3. | Doing homework is... | 29 | 21 | 3 |
| 4. | My grades are... | 38 | 14 | 1 |
| 5. | High School is... | 25 | 23 | 1 |
| 6. | College is... | 21 | 11 | 1 |

## PROJECT SOAR ACTIVITIES

1. **Were the Parent and Student meetings helpful? Yes 38 No 8**

Most students felt that the Parent and Student meetings were helpful. Some of the ideas expressed were that the meetings were fun, they provided good information and the topics discussed were important. One person said the meetings were boring and another said they weren't helpful because her mom never went. One student said, "They let me talk if I needed to."

2. **Which of the Parent and Student Meetings did you find most useful and helpful?**

Eight students said that the meeting about "Rights and Responsibilities" was the most useful and helpful. Other topics mentioned included "Teen Suicide," "Stress," "Grief," the Teen Parent Panel, and "Substance Abuse,"

3. **What could we do to improve the Parent and Student Meetings?**

Ten students responded that there was no improvement needed. Several other students suggested that there be more activities. Other suggestions were to have higher student attendance, make the meetings longer, have better topics, have everyone participate at least once, more parenting skills, and less talk.

4. **Did you like the social activities? Yes 41 No 0**

All students who responded enjoyed the social activities. Thirteen people said that they "Gave people an opportunity to meet people." Several students said that the activities were fun. Other students said that the activities were well organized and they liked free food.

5. **Did you like the Leadership Retreat? Yes 33 No 1 Why or why not?**

Students really enjoyed the Leadership Retreat. Students said that it was very educational, they learned a lot, and had fun. One student commented, "It improved the way that I am. I have become a better person." One student did not like the retreat and said, "It was kind of childish and I got sick."

6. **Has Project SOAR changed you in any way? Yes 37 No 5 If yes, how?**

Most students comments regarding changes they had experienced through their participation in Project SOAR had to do with school, i.e. their attitude about school and their study habits had improved. One student said, "It made me believe in myself. It also made me actually go and socialize with people that I never knew which for me was a good and important thing." Other students commented that they felt better about themselves and they realized that people do care.

7. **The best part of Project SOAR was...**

Twelve people said that the best part of Project SOAR was their mentor. Ten students identified the Leadership Retreat. Other things mentioned included the Social Activities, Parent and Student Meetings, and U of A Day. One student commented that "Meeting with my mentor was fun...she was, and is, my best friend."

8. **The worst part of Project SOAR was...**

Ten students said that there was nothing bad about Project SOAR. Others said that the worst part of Project SOAR was the retreat food and the meetings. One person said the worst part was " Not being able to catch up with your mentor...going all the way to the UA and you miss your mentor." Another student commented, "I will not be able to be in the program because I will be a sophomore."

9. **If I could make changes in Project SOAR, I would...**

Twenty students said they would change nothing. Other suggestions included new topics for the meetings, more panel talks, have students and mentors meet a lot more and keep the same mentors with their students. One student said, "Let sophomores join the program."

## MENTOR

1. **How often did you meet with your mentor?**

Nineteen students said that they met with their mentor 2 - 3 times per week. Two students said they met their mentor everyday, while five students said they met every other day.

2. **How long did your meetings with your mentor usually last?**

The majority of students said their meetings with their mentor lasted 11/2 - 2 hours. A few students said their meetings with their mentor lasted 4 or 5 hours. One student said they saw their mentor at field trips and meetings but did school work over the phone.

3. **What did you and your mentor do together?**

Thirty-one students said they studied or did homework with their mentors. Other activities mentioned included watching movies, talking, working on college applications, playing basketball and going out to eat.

4. **Has your mentor helped you to look at school differently? Yes 36 No 6**

The majority of students said their mentor had helped them to look at school differently. Several noted that their mentor helped them understand that school is fun and helped them to be more interested in their classes. One student said that their mentor had helped them to realized that "high school is the beginning of a career."

5. **Did your mentor help you to think about being more responsible in the decisions that you make? Yes 37 No 4**

Students felt that their mentor had helped them to be more responsible in their decision making. The comments were very similar in that the students felt their mentors had helped them think about the effects of their decisions. One student said that their mentor had helped them realize that "The decisions I make now will build my future."

6. **Did your mentor interact with your family? Yes 38 No 4**

Almost all of the students said that their mentors had interacted with their families. The majority said their mentors talked with their parents about their progress and about program activities. One student said, "She met with my family and they really appreciated all the help she was giving me."

7. **What did you like best about having a mentor?**

Most students said they appreciated the help with their school work. Several students said that they valued their friendship with their mentor. They felt that their mentor was someone who would listen to them and help them. One student said, "It's really nice to have a mentor and at the same time a very good friend" while another said, "They are good friends and change your life if you give it a chance."

8. **What didn't you like about having a mentor?**

Eighteen students said there was nothing they didn't like about having a mentor. A few students commented that they needed more help than the mentor was able to give. Another student commented that they were never able to keep to their schedule. One student noted that "She nagged me. (That's what I needed.)"

# APPENDIX O

# MENTOR EVALUATION FORM

**Project SOAR**
**Mentor Evaluation**
**Spring 1997**

We are now in the process of completing Project SOAR for this school semester. We thank you for your participation and dedication to the students and would appreciate any feedback that you are able to provide for us. Your feedback will be used to evaluate and improve our efforts in future Project SOAR activities. In the comments section, any anecdotal information would be appreciated. Please return completed questionnaires to Cristina Polsgrove. **This information is very important to us.**

**Mentor's Name:**_____ **Child's Name** _____
**Your Phone Number:**_____ **Child's School** _____

1) Do you feel as though you were successful in your mentoring relationship with your student? Yes___No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

2) Mentors are often called upon to play several key roles in their mentee's life. Did you feel as though you were called upon to play roles other than those associated with academic support, such as guidance, sponsor, confidant, advisor, role model, friend, or parent? Yes___ No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

3) In your opinion, were you able to make real contributions to your child in improving their outlook toward life, education, and prevention of violence? Yes___ No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

4) Did you feel as though you were provided with adequate training and a clear understanding of your role as mentor? Yes___ No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

5) As a mentor, were you able to develop a relationship with the parent or guardian, your student and the rest of the family? Yes___ No___ Was this important to you and your mentee? Yes___ No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

**Project SOAR**
**Mentor Evaluation**
**Spring 1997**

We are now in the process of completing Project SOAR for this school semester. We thank you for your participation and dedication to the students and would appreciate any feedback that you are able to provide for us. Your feedback will be used to evaluate and improve our efforts in future Project SOAR activities. In the comments section, any anecdotal information would be appreciated. Please return completed questionnaires to Cristina Polsgrove. **This information is very important to us.**

**Mentor's Name:**_____ **Child's Name** _____
**Your Phone Number:**_____ **Child's School** _____

1) Do you feel as though you were successful in your mentoring relationship with your student? Yes___No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

2) Mentors are often called upon to play several key roles in their mentee's life. Did you feel as though you were called upon to play roles other than those associated with academic support, such as guidance, sponsor, confidant, advisor, role model, friend, or parent? Yes___ No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

3) In your opinion, were you able to make real contributions to your child in improving their outlook toward life, education, and prevention of violence? Yes___ No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

4) Did you feel as though you were provided with adequate training and a clear understanding of your role as mentor? Yes___ No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

5) As a mentor, were you able to develop a relationship with the parent or guardian, your student and the rest of the family? Yes___ No___ Was this important to you and your mentee? Yes___ No___
Comments:_____
_____
_____

13) Which of the Parent and Student Meetings did you find most useful or helpful? _____

_____

_____

_____

14) What suggestions could you offer to improve parent meetings? _____

_____

_____

Any additional comments/suggestions? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Thank you for your comments.**

# APPENDIX P

# MENTOR EVALUATIONS SUMMARY

## (Compiled by Project SOAR Staff)

**Project SOAR - Mentor Evaluations**
**Spring 1997**

1) **Do you feel as though you were successful in your mentoring relationship with your student? Yes 38 No 10**

The majority of mentors felt as though they had had a successful relationship with their student. Many commented that their student learned about the value of an education. Mentors noticed students improving their grades, and this was a major factor in building student self-esteem. Unfortunately, some mentors found that it was a struggle to motivate their student to get involved in the activities. A few mentors overcame a bumpy start, and transformed their relationship into a strong friendship.

2) **Mentors are often called upon to play several key roles in their mentee's life. Did you feel as though you were called upon to play roles other than those associated with academic support, such as guidance, sponsor, confidant, advisor, role model, friend, or parent? Yes 42 No 2**

Many of the students came from single parent homes. Mentors gave guidance and moral support. Many of the mentors found themselves in the position of playing multiple roles: Friend, role model, advisor, parent, and confidant. Building trust was the most important part of their relationship.

3) **In your opinion, were you able to make real contributions to your child in improving their outlook toward life, education, and prevention of violence? Yes 37 No 7**

Most mentors found that their student's outlook improved regarding school. Mentors felt as though they helped students to have a more positive outlook on life. Mentors felt as though this was an ongoing process.

4) **Did you feel as though you were provided with adequate training and a clear understanding of your role as mentor? Yes 39 No 5**

Most mentors felt that they were offered adequate support and resources from the Project SOAR staff. Many mentors commented, "Training and support were excellent." Team Leaders were an effective support. A few mentors reported that they "learned as they went." Overall, mentors felt they were given a quality base of skills which prepared them to be successful mentors.

5) **As a mentor, were you able to develop a relationship with the parent or guardian, your student and the rest of the family? Yes 34 No 10. Was this important to you and your mentee? Yes 34 No 10**

Mentors felt that it was a crucial component to have positive interactions with the parent or guardian of the mentee. They reported that this was most likely to happen if the mentee had a close relationship with their own parent or guardian. Several mentors reported that the primary caretaker of the mentee had little or no interest in the child's participation in Project SOAR.

6) **Was your match with your student a good one? Yes 42 No 1. Could it have been improved in any way? Yes 14 No 29**

Many of the mentors found that they had a positive, respectful, friendship with their student. Some reported that the differences between the mentor and mentee brought about a good relationship, while others reported that their similarities allowed for a positive relationship. A few mentors found it difficult to establish trust, and acknowledged that this was necessary for a successful relationship. One mentor suggested a student and mentor gathering early in the semester to enhance student dedication to the program.

7) **What types of interactions did you have and how often did you see your student?**

Most mentors visited with their mentees 2-3 times per week. The majority of time was spent in an educational setting. They also spent time socializing, playing sports, going to movies, at the mall, at religious events, and talking on the phone. Many students visited the U of A campus with their mentors.

8) **In your conversations with your mentee, were you able to address specific topics such as goal setting, the importance of having an education, current problems that your mentee had to deal with, etc? Yes 40 No 4**

Most of the mentors reported to have open communication with their students. Mentors reported that they

discussed the importance of education, self-esteem, goals, college, family issues, school issues, and gangs with their students. Mentors reported that it was important to have trust in order to communicate openly with their student.

**9) Were there any barriers to your successful mentoring? Did these barriers interfere in your relationship with your student? Yes 30 No 14**

Many mentors reported that there were no barriers to their having a successful mentor and student relationship. A few mentors commented that their students seemed apathetic at Project SOAR meetings. A few mentors reported difficulties in keeping lines of communication open because many of the students did not have access to a phone. Some mentors reported that their students did not show up at pre-planned meeting times.

**10) As a mentor, what has been your most important accomplishment with your student this semester?**

The mentors felt that their greatest accomplishment was increasing goals and ambition in their students. Building self-esteem in their student was high on the list, as well as building a close, trusting, friendship. Mentors felt that they helped to improve student communication skills.

**11) Do you feel as though the support mechanism provided by Project SOAR was adequate, such as when assistance was needed with your student? Was the assistance readily available and were needed adjustments made promptly? Yes 41 NO 3**

The overwhelming majority of mentors felt that they received quality assistance from the entire staff of Project SOAR. The mentors also commented that the relationship with their Team Leader was an essential part of their success. Team Leaders were always available to give guidance and encouragement. The few mentors who did not agree suggested that Project SOAR should have offered more assistance to students who did not speak English.

**12) Were the weekly meetings with your Team Leaders, individual meetings with the Project SOAR Director and Coordinator, bi-monthly staff meetings, mentor social gatherings useful in your role as a mentor? Yes 41 No 3**

Many mentors felt that these meetings helped to establish good communication. They reported that the information at the meetings was almost always useful. A few mentors felt that the parent meetings needed to have clear objectives. They also found it difficult to involve many of the parents.

**13) Which of the Parent and Student Meetings did you find most useful or helpful?**

Mentors reported to have found all of the meetings useful. Some of their favorites were: Drug awareness, stress, suicide and self-worth, parent and student expectations, relationship between mentee and parent, juvenile justice representative, retreat, and self-esteem.

**14) What suggestions could you offer to improve parent meetings?**

Many of the mentors felt that the parent meetings should focus less on lecture format and more on interaction. Some suggestions included role playing, visuals, and "group therapy" activities. Bilingual facilitators were an essential part of the parent meetings. Mentors also found it important to enforce the attendance of parents to at least one of the parent meetings during the semester in order to keep their child eligible to remain in Project SOAR.

**15) Additional Comments/suggestions.**

The overwhelming majority of mentors reported that they had a terrific experience with Project SOAR. Mentors wanted more social outings for the mentors to get to know one another. One mentor said, "The other mentors gave me the best advice." One specific request asked for more information for teen mothers regarding food stamps, WIC, AHCSS, day care, and homebound programs. Mentors felt good when they helped students achieve their goals. Several mentors reported concern about follow-up procedures for the students who participated in Project SOAR.

# APPENDIX Q

# PARENT EVALUATION FORM

## Project SOAR - Parent Evaluation
## Year End Evaluation - Spring 1997

We are asking for your input and advice about how you and your child have been affected by your participation in Project SOAR. It is important to us to know if you feel your child has benefitted or improved personally or academically this past semester. We would also like to know how you think we might improve our efforts in mentoring children. Thank you for your interest and participation in the program. Your response to this evaluation is very important to us.

**Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Name:**_____ **Child's Name:**_____
**Mentor's Name:**_____

1. Do you feel as though your child has benefitted by participating in Project SOAR? Yes_____ No_____
Comments:_____
_____
_____

2. As a parent or guardian, do you feel as though you have benefitted through your participation in Project SOAR? Yes_____ No_____
Comments:_____
_____
_____

3. Have you seen positive changes in your child, such as in behavior, attitude, outlook on life or in education? Yes_____ No_____
Comments:_____
_____
_____

4. How was your interaction with your child's mentor, were the interactions helpful? Yes_____ No_____
Comments:_____
_____
_____

5. Have you noticed a change in your child's grades? Yes_____ No_____
Comments:_____
_____
_____

6. Were the Parent and Student Meetings useful to you and your child? Yes_____ No_____
Comments:_____
_____
_____

7. Which Parent and Student Meeting did you find most useful? _____

_____

_____

8. What topic areas or specific topics would you like to have presented in the Parent and Student Meetings? Check all that apply.

**__Positive Parenting**
__Single Parenting
__How to Talk About Sex
__Positive Discipline
__Coping with Change
__Help your Child Succeed in School
__Preventing Absenteeism/Truancy

**__Health/Wellness**
__Coping with Stress
__Depression & Teen Suicide
__Building Healthy Self-Esteem
__Coping with Angry Children
__Understanding Childhood Stress
__Learning Disabilities

**__Alcohol/Drug Abuse/Violence**
__Is Your Child Using Drugs?
__Preventing Underage Drinking
__Gun Awareness and Safety
__Youth and Gangs
__Help your Child Handle Peer Pressure
__Juvenile Violence and Its Prevention

**Other suggestions**: _____ _____ _____

9. What could we do to improve the Parent and Student Meetings? _____

_____

_____

10. Would you be interested in participating in family activities other than Parent and Student Meetings?
Yes_____ No_____
Comments:_____

_____

_____

11. Would you recommend this program to other students and parents? Yes_____ No_____
Comments:_____

_____

_____

12. How could we better serve the students and families involved in Project SOAR?
Comments:_____

_____

_____

Comments: If you would like to offer any additional comments or concerns, please use the space provided below._____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Thank you for your comments.**

# APPENDIX R

## PARENT EVALUATION SUMMARY

## (Compiled by Project SOAR Staff)

**Project SOAR - Parent Evaluations**
**Spring 1997**

1) **Do you feel as though your child has benefitted by participating in Project SOAR? Yes 20 No 0**

All of the parents who responded reported that their child's mentor was helpful. They found it important that their child interact with students from the University of Arizona. Many said that because of Project SOAR their child is succeeding in school, becoming more confident, and learning about accountability and consequences.

2) **~~As a parent or guardian,~~ do you feel as though you have benefitted through your participation in Project SOAR? Yes 20 No 1**

The majority of parents felt as though Project SOAR has helped to foster communication with their child. The parents felt fortunate to have participated in Project SOAR, and felt Project SOAR meetings provided them with valuable information on issues they and their children are facing. A few parents mentioned their great appreciation of their child's mentor for being able to better communicate with their child when they were unable to.

3) **Have you seen positive changes in your child, such as behavior, attitude, outlook on life or in education? Yes 19 No 2**

Most parents noticed an overall positive change in their child's attitude. Many felt as though their child's self confidence has improved as a result of Project SOAR. Some comments included, "...In education, she has shown us she can do it." and "He acts more mature than before." Parents acknowledged that change is progressive, and that Project SOAR gave their children the tools to positively change their life.

4) **How was your interaction with your child's mentor, were the interactions helpful? Yes 18 No 1**

The majority of parents felt as though they received feedback and progress reports on a regular basis from their child's mentor. A few parents asked for more documented feedback. One parent reported there was no interaction between her and her child's mentor because she was handicapped. Another parent said, (regarding her child's mentor), "She is someone I would always want as a friend."

5) **Have you noticed a change in your child's grades? Yes 16 No 5**

The majority of parents reported a positive change in their child's grades. They felt as though their child tried harder in school because of the mentor's consistent support. A few parents reported no change in their child's grades, or grades had dropped. One parent reported that her child's mentor was assigned too late to do any good.

6) **Were the Parent and Student Meetings useful to you and your child? Yes 20 No 0**

All the parents enjoyed the subjects discussed at the meetings, the food, and the communication. Most felt that the meetings aided in their relationship with their child. Parents enjoyed meeting and learning from one another. One parent commented that the meetings gave the parent and child something positive to discuss.

7) **Which Parent and Student Meeting did you find the most useful?**

Parents found the following Parent and Student Meetings most useful: Substance abuse, self-esteem, boundaries, domestic violence, and depression. One parent appreciated the direct information about substance abuse, and said, "Straight talk about substance abuse." A few parents said that all the meetings were useful.

8) **What topic areas or specific topics would you like to have presented in the Parent and Student Meetings? Check all that apply.**

**Positive Parenting**
9 Single Parenting
11 How to Talk About Sex
11 Positive Discipline
12 Coping with Change
15 Help your Child Succeed in School
10 Preventing Absenteeism/Truancy

**Health/Well**
11 Coping with stress
9 Depression & Teen Suicide
11 Building Healthy Self-Esteem
14 Coping with Angry Children
10 Understanding Childhood Stress
9 Learning Disabilities

**Alcohol/Drug Abuse/Violence**
7 Is your child Using Drugs?
7 Preventing Underage Drinking
8 Gun Awareness and Safety
8 Youth and gangs
11 Help your Child Handle Peer Pressure
11 Juvenile Violence and its Prevention

**Other suggestions:** Coping with Parent Drug Abuse.

9) **What could we do to improve the Parent and Student Meetings?**

Parents reported that the meetings would be more effective if parent attendance was more consistent. Teen parent participants wanted longer meetings (2 hrs.). Several parents suggested adding more interactive activities. Some comments were, "Have more role play," and "Get the group more involved, more discussion."

10) **Would you be interested in participated in family activities other that Parent and Student Meetings? Yes 17 No 2**

A few parents suggested adding meetings for parents only. One parent commented, "Maybe if just parents meet in a park to talk and exchange ideas." Another parent suggested adding a family retreat.

11) **Would you recommend this program to other students and parents? Yes 18 No 1**

The overwhelming majority of parents felt as though Project SOAR gave them a chance to improve their relationship with their child. Parents appreciated the close contact with mentors and monthly progress reports. Parents felt that Project SOAR helped to improve student performance in school.

12) **How could we better serve the students and families involved in Project SOAR?**

Parent suggestions included: Longer meetings, more topics covered at meetings, more mentors, fun activities (stress relievers, ie. baseball, volleyball, talking), teachers and mentors should work together more, and more literature handouts which would allow for more thorough reflection at home.

**Additional Comments:** The majority of parents took this opportunity to thank their child's mentor. They said that they enjoyed being a part of Project SOAR, and would like to take part in Project SOAR next school session. Many parents voiced their hope that their other children might be able to participate in Project SOAR in the future.